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BRIEFS FOR OUR TIMES

BY

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BRIEFS FOR OUR TIMES

THE SUPREME GIFT.

“For he that loveth not his brother, whom he seeth, how can he love God, whom he seeth not?” *1 St. John iv. 20.*”

THERE stands the argument of St. John. It gets rid at once of one of the many illusions that grow around our religious life. In the days of the Apostle as now, there were, doubtless, many seemingly religious people who cherished the idea that they could love God and at the same time despise and hate their neighbor. The thing cannot be done and it is useless to attempt it. Yet there are in all our churches people who are trying very hard to do it. They lay the flattering unction to their soul that they can love God without loving their neighbor also. We all know some of these people. They sometimes hold the first place in church. Their lives are exemplary; they move in the best society; they are regular in attendance at all the services; they pray and sing with great earnestness and devotion; they contribute to the mis-

sionary fund; they are, not unfrequently, counted among the pillars of the church. And whilst they do all these excellent things, thinking they are loving God, they have scarcely a spark of sympathy or love for their neighbor; in fact they go so far as to despise and even hate him. Such religion is vain; and for the obvious reason that one cannot love God whom he does not see, if he fails to love his neighbor whom he does see.

Sometime ago I looked upon a remarkable piece of statuary. It represented a soldier standing on guard, prepared to meet the enemy. There is a look upon his face of determination mingled with pathetic sadness and fierce affection, such as one would suppose might gleam from the eye of a tiger in its wild endeavor to protect its young. At the soldier's feet lies something,— at first sight one cannot distinguish exactly what, but presently he dimly discerns the outline of a human figure, and then he sees that it is the body of a dead soldier. It has been riddled by bullets; the limbs are torn and mangled; the whole form is frightful in its disfigurement. It is something to inspire fear and trembling, something to cause even a brave man to close his eyes and shrink in awe. Still, that other soldier stands over it, supposedly at the risk of his life, quiet, alert, resolute,— his mo-

tive, love; his object, to save the body of his comrade from further mutilation and dishonor. Underneath these two sculptured figures are carved the simple words, "He is my brother."

That striking group represents the love and devotion that should exist between ourselves and our fellow-men. Every true man and certainly every true Christian must cherish a love for his fellow-man. Without it his life must be barren and without influence; his profession of religion meaningless. The Savior of the world in proclaiming His mission, said: "A new commandment I give unto you: That ye love one another." No distinction was made as to either country, or people, or creed. St. John especially enforced this commandment.

Hitherto the Roman, the Greek and the Jew had been exclusive in their affections; henceforth a change was directed. Now the love of which the Apostle speaks is not a sentimental but a practical virtue, and we are bound as Christians to apply it to the everyday life around us in our dealings with our brethren.

This love of the neighbor should influence and control us in all the relations of life. It should be evident in our social and business relations. If it were so we would soon be able to get rid of most of our industrial and other

troubles. For the golden rule would be our sole guide.

Let us take a case, say that of the head of a great business concern. The man who loves his fellow-men will pay an adequate rate of wages. That does not mean a sum of money which represents just one remove from starvation. No man ought to be content that the people in his factory, in his mine, or in his shop should live like the bondmen in Egypt. No man has a right to profit by his neighbor's misfortune; nor should he permit the pursuit of any work under dangerous or unsanitary conditions. Every man who dwells upon this earth is a child of God and the brother,—not the slave,—of even his most successful fellow.

In our domestic relations and dealings with strangers brotherly love should also lead us to adopt and practice gentle manners and kindlier ways. This gift would get rid of much of the daily friction in families and unseemly quarrels. It would make many of us more considerate of the interests and feelings of others. It would make life for all of us much pleasanter than it is. It has been said that in the rush and turmoil of our strenuous life we as a nation are growing careless in our deportment; that we lack reverence for the aged, the honorable, and the heroic; that we do not hesitate when

self-interest is concerned to use our officials, even the highest of them, with disrespect and sometimes insolence; that notwithstanding all this, on occasion our women can assume the demeanor of queens and our men the dignity of princes.

But let fraternal love rule our actions and then we will put aside all sham and pretense; there will be no lording it over others; no assumption of being higher or better than those around us; the kindly spirit and courteous manner will spring naturally and gracefully from the depths of the good heart. For the secret of true politeness is love. One would never think of inflicting pain where he loves. The true gentleman, as Cardinal Newman observes, carefully avoids whatever may cause a jar or a jolt in the minds of those with whom he is cast,—he avoids all clashing of opinion or collision of feeling; all restraint or suspicion or gloom or resentment he puts aside; his great concern being to make every one at ease. He makes light of favors while he does them, and seems to be receiving when he is conferring. He has no ears for slander or gossip; he is scrupulous in imputing motives to those who interfere with him, and always interprets everything for the best.

Brotherly love too should make one more charitable in his treatment of the fallen and un-

fortunate. As Michael Angelo could discern in the rough block of marble the "winged angel struggling to be free"; as the artist passing through the meanest parts of a city discovers exquisite beauty under the grime and coarseness of the street child, even so a perceptive nature with this supreme gift of love beholds in the most debased and degraded the marred work of his Creator.

And there is a great reward here and hereafter for those who exercise brotherly love. Good deeds are reflective in their character; they react almost instantly. It seems strange that more people do not appreciate the fact, for there is no other debtor so grandly conscientious as love. The friendly manner attracts friends. Love creates love. Love is happiness. And we have endless opportunities for exercising this supreme virtue. Our brothers lie stricken all along life's highway;—brave men who have fought and failed; feeble folk who were never strong enough for earth's conflict; some without health; others without money; some without friends; others without hope. What is to become of them?

If we would be helpers in this world of perplexity and sorrow; if we desire any real peace and happiness; if we would ever hope to rest our aching heads where St. John rested his, on

the very bosom of Jesus, we must practice the lessons of fraternal charity.

That is what our Christianity, the religion of love, teaches us above all else. The love of our fellow-man must always go with the love of God. We cannot separate them; in fact the two are one,—we cannot love God without loving our neighbor also.

THE REIGN OF LAW.

“For what things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap.” *St. Paul, Gal. vi. 8.*

THAT is a plain simple truth never questioned in the physical world. In the moral world too many of us seem to forget or ignore it. Yet here the law is no less fixed and certain. Man is a moral being subject to the moral laws of the world; as he sows in this field so also shall he reap. There is a disposition in some quarters to regard man as the victim of seen or unseen forces which either make or break him. There is a false teaching which says there is a pre-determined course marked out for each man by an arbitrary, partial power, and each individual must follow this predestined course.

Then there is also a philosophy of fate and chance, and they who believe it look upon the soul as in a lifelong game of battledoor and shuttlecock. Too many persons regard their lives as marbles flung out indiscriminately upon the bagatelle board of human existence. They bump against obstacles, wobble around life's honors and go bounding and rolling toward some unknown destiny. Pathetic indeed is it to see

those who have yielded to such teaching. Many of them ceased to struggle and ceased to care. Baffled, discouraged by the strange and hard experiences through which they have passed, they have lost, or well nigh lost, their faith in human volition and divine Providence. It is pitiful to see them swept along like driftwood on a river or hustled about like dead leaves in an autumn wind, victims of forces over which they cease to exert any control.

Much of our modern fiction is saturated with the thought that heredity and environment are the all powerful factors in human destiny; that personality counts for little or nothing; that every man is the ghost of his dead ancestors, who look through his eyes, speak in his words and act in his deeds.

It is against this morbid and erroneous conception of life that we raise a word of protest and warning. Heredity and environment are not to be underrated. They are powerful factors in human life. But they are not to be overestimated. We know that in every man there is an untainted power, something which passes from generation to generation untouched by change, and even though it may be shut in by evil conditions and tied to a thousand evil tendencies yet it may, and it does frequently, assert itself and show its superiority.

Man we know is not a slave, nor a machine, nor the creature of blind fate or chance. He is morally free. It is true of every man that he has the power of moral choice. If one denies that then it is useless to appeal to motives. We may as well close our schools and churches, abolish our courts of justice and penitentiaries at once. Preachers may cease pleading with the reason and the consciences of men. Deny man's power of moral choice and you deny man's personal accountability and destroy manhood itself.

Man we know is also under the reign of law. We all admit that of man's bodily nature, but there are laws moral as well as physical. Man's freedom consists in an adjustment of his spirit to moral laws. Both physical and moral laws find their gravitating centre in God. These laws are inexorable in their operation. We talk about breaking the laws of God, but that is careless speech. We break the laws of God? No. If we do not obey them they break us. There is no more escaping the consequences of the violation of the moral law than there is exemption from a broken body if you violate the law of gravitation.

Man is under the law of heredity. This means vastly more than the reproduction of the traits and characteristics of his parents. It

means that he is not only heir to his environment, inheriting, for example, the lineaments of his parents, affected by his birthplace, his nursing, early training and the like, but it means also that he is also inheriting himself in himself. He is reproducing his own character. He is repeating himself in himself. Each repetition of an act is intenser than the preceding. Each bad act becomes the parent of many bad acts, even as each good act becomes the parent of many good acts. In other words, he illustrates in himself the law of the harvest: "Whatsoever a man sows that shall he also reap."

It is our own will that determines our destiny. Nothing else. There is a difference between the features of the face and the countenance. God made the features, the individual makes the countenance. The features are His work and He gives to every man his own natural face; — all different from each other, and yet all of one type. But the countenances of men are far more diverse than their features. We know men and women by their look. We read them, or at least we try to do so, by looking at their faces,— not at their features, their eyes or lips because God made these; but at a certain cast or motion, shape and expression which their fea-

tures have acquired. It is this that we call the countenance.

And what makes the countenance? The inward and mental habit; the constant pressure of the mind, the frequent, perpetual repetition of its act. We can detect at once a vain-glorious, or conceited, or foolish person. The thing is stamped on the countenance. One sees at a glance on the faces of the cunning, the deep, the dissembling, certain corresponding lines traced on the face as legibly as if they were written there. And as it is with the countenance so is it with the character. God gave us our intellect, our heart, and our will; but our character is something different from these. The character is that intellectual and moral texture into which we are forever weaving the inward life that is in us. It is the result of the habitual or prevailing use we are making of our intellect, heart, and will. We are forever at work like the weaver at the loom; the shuttle is always going, and the woof is always growing. So we are always forming a character for ourselves. And this is just what the Apostle says, but in another way, that as we sow so also shall we reap.

Each one of us is then responsible for his own character. Each man has the liberty of sowing what he pleases. The harvest that he

reaps is the aggregate of his habits; that is to say, his character. Accordingly, it is for each man to say whether he will be good or bad; whether he will grow better or worse. Each of us is responsible for his or her destiny. We are responsible for our destiny because we are responsible for our character. Character determines destiny. A profound truth lies in the adage: "Every man is the architect of his own fortune." For daily character is shaping your future destiny:

For the structure that we raise
Time is with materials filled;
Our to-days and yesterdays
Are the blocks with which we build.

It is well to recall, too, that the harvest gathered is ever larger than the seed sown. He who sows sparingly reaps sparingly. He who sows bountifully reaps bountifully. For example, a man sows the love of money. What does he reap? Dollars and cents? Possibly but one thing he does reap,—an intensifying greed of gain. As the growth is ever larger than the germ, he grows fonder and fonder of money. It is not to be wondered at if he grows covetous, becomes more and more grasping and grinding. Nor need we wonder if we see him grow miserly, until the habit of miserliness is ever becoming more and more confirmed. What

is true of covetousness and avarice is also true of intemperance, indolence, scepticism and the whole train of moral evils.

We should then never forget this simple truth and live accordingly. St. Augustine, speaking of himself while he was still in the habits of sin, said that they bound him like fetters. "I was bound," he tells us, "by a chain which I had made for myself. No other man made it. The chain was my own iron will." And St. Peter speaks of a soul bound "in ropes of darkness." This binding occurs when the time of grace is past and the day of probation is done and the judgment is come. To escape that dreadful destiny we should see to it that we are sowing the seed of good habits so that in the harvest time we may reap life everlasting.

THE VALUE OF SELF-CONTROL.

“The patient man is better than the valiant; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh cities.” *Proverbs xvi. 32.*

How true it is that man's worst enemy is oftentimes himself. It is a great thing to take a strongly fortified city, but it is much greater that a man conquer himself. The worst form of slavery is that which is of one's own making. The tyranny of passion blasts the fairest prospects of life. The consequences of the lack of self-control we daily witness and deplore. It is needless to say that a large share of the vices and crimes which exist in our modern society would be lessened, if people exercised more fully the virtue of self-restraint. How often do we hear a person say: “I could not help it; I did it in a moment of passion; I wasn't myself at the time,”—and this is put forward as our best plea to justify the worst kind of conduct. It is, indeed, true that if we allow our passions and impulses to rule us, the freedom of morality is weakened if not entirely lost, and we end by becoming the slaves of these uncurbed emotions. And so far, it may be

said, we are scarcely responsible for what we do, since we are not free, but governed by our passion. But knowing this should we not set about controlling our disordered impulses? It is important, then, to know how we are to secure this self-control.

What is self-control? It is the act of restraining our passions, emotions and unruly desires. When persisted in these acts of self-discipline grow into fixed habits, whence springs a strong and noble character. The habit of self-control brings about a moral drill which is fundamental in building up character; it introduces system and order into our life. A person who governs himself will always have self-reliance; his thoughts and actions will always be under the control of right reason and conscience. It has been truly said that in the supremacy of self-control consists one of the perfections of the ideal man. Not to be impulsive; not to be spurred hither and thither by each desire that in turn comes uppermost,—but to be self-restrained, self-balanced, that is what moral education and religion should do for us.

Now we know that we can train and habituate ourselves to patient endurance; we can force a calmness of manner when difficulties arise; or we can give ourselves up to mental disturbance and complaining on the slightest provocation.

It is also possible for us to grow into the habit of always looking at things on their brightest side; of thinking the best of our neighbors' doings; of being considerate in our judgments and opinions of others; of cultivating, in short, a bright and cheerful disposition. And this is a great gain to ourselves and others; for it spreads joy and happiness all around us. On the other hand to the man of morose disposition the world appears to be always under a dark cloud with never even a fleeting glimpse of God's glorious sunlight. If a man would get through life honorably and peacefully, he must necessarily learn to practice self-control in small things as well as great. Men have to bear as well as to forbear. The temper has to be held in subjection to the judgment, and the little demons of ill humor, petulance, and sarcasm kept resolutely at a distance. If they once find an entrance to the mind, they are apt to return and establish for themselves a permanent occupation there. Not alone must this control be exerted over our thoughts and actions, but over our words. We may think evil which is wrong, but if, at the same time, we express our evil thoughts in evil language it is much worse, on account of the scandal it gives to others. We should curb our impetuous words, our biting sarcasm, our arrogant and indiscreet replies. A prudent and

thoughtful man will ever forbear to utter witty and cutting remarks which might hurt the feelings of another; or what is more to be feared might break a sacred friendship for the sake of making his smart sallies gain for him a short-lived applause.

But there are greater penalties which man pays for the sacrifice of self-control and for the unbridled indulgence of his passions. As already stated in seeking freedom from moral restraints man becomes a slave to a tyrant than which he can know none more unpitying, none more cruel. Were a tyrant to arise and exact but one-tenth of the slavery that Passion exacts of its devotees there is not a people, not even the most submissive, that would not rise in their might to crush the oppressor. The passions fill our almshouses and prisons, our hospitals and insane asylums, our homes and shelters. They keep our criminal and divorce courts very busy; they breed strikes and riots; trusts and labor unions; make necessary the maintenance of an army of police; call for bolts on our doors and burglar alarms in our homes. They pile up the taxes necessary for the support of law and order; they poison our politics; undermine our commerce; blight our education, charity and religion; they threaten to write across our civilization the fatal words written across ruined

civilizations: "Doomed because of lack of self-control." For is it not true that in almost every instance the sufferings of mankind originate in their wilfulness, their determination to gratify passion or appetite, without reference to the probable consequences? One of the most singular things in connection with the whole matter is that no man is apparently willing or able to profit by the terrible experience of those who have traveled over the way of life in advance of them and left behind them records full of instruction. Passion appears to be as potent for the undoing of men and women, appetite as powerful, after more than six thousand years of experience and warning, as it was in the early morning of the world. Passion transforms man into a kind of savage; it makes him brutal; the easy prey of every horrid vice. It tramples upon every interest, friendship, honor, even personal safety; there is no sin or crime which it will not lead one to commit. Why then, should we not control it? Should it not be the chief business of our life to moderate and command our passions; to temper our affections; to keep such a sacred guard over our disordered impulses that they shall never rise to disturb the peace and happiness of our souls. Yes; that should be the chief care of every reasonable man, but especially of every true Chris-

tian; there can be little religion where passion rules. Let us, then, cultivate this habit of self-control in all things. For he who rules his passions, desires, and fears,—who in short conquers himself,—is greater than a king,—greater even than the man who captures a city.

THE DUTY OF SERVICE.

Let the charity of the brotherhood abide in me. *St. Paul, Heb. xiii. 1.*

WE all recognize that the badge and sign of the true Christian is the practice of Charity. Indeed it is true to say that no one can be a Christian at all who does not try to help others. If there be any truth that the Master emphasized in His teaching and by His life more than all else it was His love of our neighbor. Without it religion seems worthless. It is the supreme test of the sincerity of our belief. It is the greatest of all gifts and virtues. Men and women may have all the outward appearance of sanctity, but if this great virtue — the love of the brotherhood — does not abide in us our goodness is hollow and empty — mere sham. “Lord, Lord,” cried aloud those who were shut out from the Kingdom, “did we not prophesy in Thy Name?” The answer came! “I know you not.” Right belief is good, but right doing is better. Let us then consider the duty of helping one another, of serving our fellow-men.

And first, let me observe that while the obliga-

tion is obvious its fulfillment is often perplexing. It is a difficult and frequently a discouraging thing to help others. There are so many ways in which we can assist others that we are often confused in making a choice; and after we have rendered our service we not unfrequently find that those whom we sought to help are not only wholly ungrateful, but critical, even unto bitterness. They say of the giver that he or she might have done better; that the gift was after all paltry and mean; that something other than what was given would have been much more acceptable. There is quite a general complaint and much fault-finding with the way we have distributed our gifts.

And so we are discouraged and led to inquire whether there is any use in trying to help those who are never satisfied! They are so ungrateful. How many of the great philanthropists, the world's benefactors, those who have done the most for mankind, have like the loving, merciful Saviour, died of a broken heart? Even though a man gives away with the purest motives and for the noblest ends his millions, he is unfairly criticised, and condemned unjustly. Men are exceedingly cruel, without meaning to be so, and they wound most severely their best friends and benefactors. Great philanthropists, like Mr. Rockefeller, Mr. Carnegie and others, have

been most severely censured when they are most lavish in distributing for public purposes their millions.

And so too the Christian who in a much smaller way wants to be of service to others finds himself in a dilemma: he must help his weaker brethren if he is to keep the law of Christ; that he knows: and this also, that much of that help or service will be abused or rejected. What then must he do? Is he to give up the practice of charity altogether? By no means. Rather the very difficulty of the situation ought to excite him to more ardent service, seeing that God Himself has felt it and is feeling it daily. To help men who ignore alike the help and the helper,—is not that what God is doing constantly? The sun shines, but how many think of it or thank God when they feel it? We abound in health; we feel its thrill and force; we leap and walk and laugh; but how many of us silently look heavenward and thank Him who is the Lifegiver. Mercies innumerable surround us and are new every morning, yet the best of us very often forget. Hence those who help are drawn nearer to God in this very struggle to be helpful; in the difficulty we are co-workers with Him, and that shows us the bigness and importance of the matter. It is not merely a question of my doing a little good here

and there because I think I ought to; but it is a question of my entering into the whole spirit of God's life and doing good because I cannot help it; because I have risen to the place where the very character of my existence makes me find joy in doing helpful things; it does not matter whether men accept them or not; we have done our part, even though those whom we serve or help fail to show any appreciation or gratitude.

Now, let me indicate some practical ways in which we can help those around us. We find the works of mercy are of two kinds: Corporal and Spiritual. To feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to house the homeless, to visit the sick, and to bury the dead — this is the way in which we can help the bodies of men. These works of mercy and charity the Master did and He bids His followers to do likewise. Upon every Christian rests this duty. It is a personal duty that cannot well be discharged through an agency or charitable organization. It is part of our personal duty to seek out the needy and helpless in our neighborhood and assist them. We must look for opportunities. So many people think their charity is to be measured by the way in which they answer appeals! Why, that is the poorest and cheapest way, and often leads to failure. To hunt up the needy, to go out and seek the oppressed,—

that is the demand. Hence the individual rather than the organization is the divine suggestion. Societies for service are well enough, but they can only succeed when their individual members are alive each to his own personal duty. The danger of the day is over-organization in our charitable efforts.

And with this material service must always go a tender considerate sympathy for the poor and suffering. The hearts of the poor are often hungrier than their bodies; many a poor child in the slums would rather have a kiss than a piece of cake. Nor are the grown people different, save that their pride oftentimes silences them. "Nobody cares," cried a poor girl in Paris, as she ran towards the river to drown herself. "I care," answered a noble Christian woman who heard the cry of the despairing girl. And from that cry and answer has grown one of the great charities of the French capital. Yes; sympathy must always be joined with material aid. The divine glory of the Master's service was always marked with this supreme gift of sympathy.

And now let me say a word about the spiritual works of mercy and the duty of practicing them. Spiritual work would seem to be the easiest kind for a Christian to give; yet it is, in truth, the most difficult; for the simple reason

that the soul of a man is the most subtle part of him and the hardest to find. He may display his heart; he may be unable to conceal his material need; but his soul he hardly knows himself where to find. And often in helping men spiritually we have to join them in a search for this great part of their nature which is so covered with many ugly things that no avenue of approach is visible. Yet such help is the most important of all. Let us then, help our brother to find his soul; to cultivate the virtues that should adorn it; to look beyond the things seen to the unseen; let us make him understand that this is life Eternal: to know God, our Father, and Christ, our Saviour and Friend.

THE COMMON PEOPLE.

“ And a great multitude followed Him.” *St. John vi.*
2.

READING over the history of the world's Saviour there is nothing which strikes one so forcibly as the influence He possessed over the multitude. And if we consider the story of His life a little more closely we will see, furthermore, that He had a special love for what we call “ the common people,” the simple, homely, unsophisticated people, as distinguished from those who occupy high station, either by virtue of birth, or wealth, or genius, or talent, or social influence.

There were great people in the time of Christ, as there are now. There were Pharisees, who were the representatives of the higher class, men who led lives of exterior decorum, who were remarkable for their religious observances; and there were Scribes, learned in the law of Moses, men also of regular habits. But when Christ came in contact with these people we find that there was a sternness upon His brow, a keenness in His glance, and the tone of reproach in

His voice. He did not find Himself at home with these people. There were those, also, of high worldly position; but we do not read that they claimed the friendship of the Saviour. There was King Herod; he, no doubt, would have been glad to know and speak to Christ. These Pharisees and Herod were plotting the life of Christ; because there was a rumor abroad that the Christ was John the Baptist, returned from that untimely grave to which Herod had consigned him.

But the crowning proof of Christ's love for the multitude, His special love for the "common people," is found when His divine wisdom would establish a permanent institution, which He Himself so often referred to as His kingdom, that institution which was to perpetuate His gracious mission to untold generations — the church.

When He came to make the selection of those to whom He was to entrust the sublime command, "Go, teach all nations," He did not look about Him for representatives among those who were of royal birth; He did not endeavor to find men of great influence, some statesman, some philosopher, who had grown gray in the study of his special branch, whose features were wrinkled with long years of earnest research; He did not look for some great orator, so that

His gospel might reach the multitude. No: when He came to make His selection He looked among the "common people," and He found there a handful of unknown men without any social standing, void of all political influence or worldly means. These were the persons whom He selected to make known the truths that He came on earth to teach mankind. Is it any wonder, then, that the multitude, for the honor of our own common nature, should love Christ and follow Him wherever He went? When, in the crowded cities, He could not get a hearing; when society, groaning under the evils from which it suffered, did not recognize Him as having the power to heal it, He went forth into the mountains; and still the multitude, attracted by some sweetness in His bearing, by the gentle accents in which He addressed them, followed Him, and they forgot the hardships of the journey, the discomforts of the desert,— nay, they forgot the natural desire for food and drink; and the merciful, compassionate Saviour, He who has given fertility to the soil and fruitfulness to the seed, wrought one of those extraordinary works which testify to the compassionate heart of Christ to reach the wants of suffering humanity.

And this leads me to a further thought to which I desire especially to direct attention.

You will observe in the church which Christ established the same spirit of compassion, the same love for the multitude, that its divine Founder had. Christ entrusted to His apostles the care of the poor; and well did the apostles and those who came after them fulfill that sacred trust. Those who were to teach the nations were, for the most part, selected from the multitude. The gospel which they preached was presented to the multitude. All the legislation, the laws which are enacted, the public functions of the church are for the benefit of the multitude. And so much has the church of Christ loved the multitude, the "common people," that, from the very beginning, she proclaimed liberty to those who were entrusted to her keeping. She has been the opponent, so far as it is possible for her to be, of all that is degrading, all that tends to dehumanize the race. She announced freedom to the children of God. Her doors are ever open to the multitude, and invariably has she stood between the poor and those who would lay heavy and unjust burdens upon them. She recognizes no caste or color. All races are the object of her tender care and solicitude. Everything which she does is done not for a caste or class, but for the great body of the people. Read the history of the Church and you will find that it is so. No

matter what people say, this is the mission of the Christian Church,—a mission to care for the needs, the spiritual needs, of the multitude; to stand up for the dignity of the race, for the manhood and the womanhood of the individual.

We all realize how hard is the lot of the poor; how, under all other systems of religion or philosophy, but little thought is had for the poor. We know that Buddha explained poverty as “the curse of Brahma.” We know that Paganism, the old and the new, regards poverty as almost a disgrace. But Christ, the Lord and Master, loved and blessed the poor. He called the poor His own; He told the world that the poor we should have always with us; He urged us to be always kind and generous in our treatment of them. Did He not say? “As much as ye have done it unto the least of them, ye have done it unto Me.”

SOCIAL UNREST.

“Let us not love in word nor in tongue, but in deed and in truth.” *1 John iii. 18.*

PERHAPS there never was a time when the world talked more about its social works than at the present. We have social upliftings of every description. We have “university settlements” and “fresh air funds,” and “penny provident clubs,” “humane societies” and “societies for prevention of cruelty to children.” We have public baths, and gymnasiums, and play grounds, and reading rooms, and splendid libraries provided either by municipalities or by private munificence; and yet side by side with all this rises the spectre of socialism growing more and more threatening in its ugly look at each manifestation of its power and its discontent. Strikes and lock-outs and riots which are quelled only by armed force furnish a constant topic for the press and keep the governments of the world in an intermittent fever of anxiety and dread. Without any premonitory sign the commerce or industry of a nation is checked; crowds of idle men block the streets;

and antagonism between the rich and poor, the employer and employed, is growing more and more pronounced and bitter. In spite of what we are pleased to style "our advanced civilization"; in spite of the countless philanthropic schemes that are launched upon the world and the vast sums of money lavished upon their furtherance, the dividing line between the two classes of our modern society is growing wider and wider. One of our ablest journals has recently described it as a "gulf between the cultivated and the uncultivated, and declares it was never so wide and deep as at the present day." "Most cultivated men," the writer adds, "have for the 'submerged tenth' an extreme and uncontrollable distaste." And it is unfortunately but too true that the same feeling is reciprocated by the "submerged." Those who live on the two sides, this writer observes, "bore one another insufferably."

Now, if this be true, why, it may be asked, has not the extension of modern benevolence created a better feeling among these two classes of society? And the answer seems to be this: because much of our modern benevolence has back of it no religious motive or sentiment, and not even genuine philanthropy. Some one has well said that "philanthropy," as generally understood "is like a woman admiring herself;

true philanthropy, or charity, is a mother with a child in her arms."

The discontent of "the submerged tenth" who are sometimes reproached with being ungrateful, very probably arises from the suspicion that many of the efforts to clean up the slums and make the "City Beautiful" and provide recreation for the people are prompted rather by a desire of the well-to-do to remove as far as possible anything unsavory or unsightly, or unhealthy, than to improve the condition of the poorer classes. The old Romans used to supply bread and the circus to appease the dissatisfied plebeians, but the foolish and inhuman device failed and did not save the Empire.

As a matter of fact there is no means of settling the unrest of society, of putting an end to the discontent which is so threatening at the present time, except genuine and sincere philanthropy; and there is no genuine and sincere philanthropy except it is based on love which the religion of Christ inspires. We are not going to do any good to the degraded, ragged, and angry workman, no matter how we may lavish money on making his condition better, unless he recognizes in us a deep and sincere conviction that he has his rights as a man which ought to be considered, and his dignity as a man which ought to be consulted. The beau-

tiful old Spanish way of refusing a beggar by saying, "Forgive me brother for the love of God for I, too, am poor," will satisfy the mendicant infinitely more than if you flung him your purse. The kind-hearted Christian woman who had no money to give a poor widow but who kissed her in lieu of an alms received as a reward the wish—"May God do the like to you!"—did more to appease discontent in the tired heart than if she had given her money and passed on. "How will you give this piece of bread to the poor man?" said a mother to her boy: "I will take off my hat and thank him," was the answer. Such methods are a recognition of the equality which exists between man and man, and its denial is more irritating than any inequality of fortune.

Again many of the good people engaged in this work of philanthropy are bitten with the craze for statistics and for regulating everything by law.

"The organized charity, scrimped and iced
In the name of a cautious, statistical Christ,"

is too much in evidence. They believe that, given a certain machinery they can make men just, sober, pure, honest. When they find out that human nature is too strong for them their only remedy is more law. Hence we see the

country overrun with societies for the reformation of everything in sight, and these societies believe the best way to carry out their purposes is to have a law passed by the Legislature commanding people to be moral. It is no lesson to them that law after law remains a failure. Deep down in their hearts they have the conviction that men can be made moral by exterior agencies and they cast the blame of their failure on the police or the judges of the community, never admitting that their first principle is false.

Mr. Carnegie does not make any very loud profession of religion, yet he has more than once laid down the sound Christian principle that the possession of wealth is only a stewardship; that riches are given by the "Giver of every good gift" to this or that man not for his personal luxury and extravagant indulgence, but to share them with his poorer neighbors. Not giving then at second hand through agents and employés, but with one's own hands; a method of alms-giving which will force one to mingle with the poorer classes and produce the conviction of sympathy with the sorrows which poverty entails and the belief that helping the poor is a privilege and a source of blessing to the giver — that is what really counts. The antagonism between the rich and poor which is

so acute at the present time was unknown in past ages and though laboring men had their unions and guilds better organized perhaps than to-day there were none of those fierce conflicts which at the present time threaten the whole social fabric.

The uplifting of the masses; the care of the poor; providing them with decent habitations; ensuring them living wages; protecting the orphans; caring for the sick; in a word, bettering the material condition of people less fortunate than ourselves and brightening their existence even in a worldly sense, is not a new invention, or an ideal of the present day; it is as old as Christianity itself, and the practical fulfillment of all those ideas has ever been the aim of the Church from the beginning.

But along with this idea went the Christian conception of man. According to that idea man is a creature whose chief value lies in his soul. That soul was made for another life, and man is here on earth to save his soul. He has temporal and social interests, but he has them only as helps to the great end of his existence. It matters little how successful he may be in earthly things all is lost if he is not a success in things eternal. What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul? or What shall a man give in ex-

change for his soul? This doctrine may seem hopelessly old-fashioned and out of touch with modern thought, but there it is,—the fundamental idea of Christianity, and Christianity never grows old.

SOCIALISM: TRUE AND FALSE.

“For neither was there any one needy among them. For as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the price of the things they sold. And distribution was made to every one according as he had need.” *Acts iv. 34-35.*

THE first Christians evidently believed in some form of communism. They went further; they put their belief into practice. And with what excellent results these words of the Acts of the Apostles set forth. They succeeded in abolishing poverty among their own members. There was not a single needy or poor person in the whole community. For from the common treasury made up of the sales of the lands and houses of the rich the poor were cared for. It was an ideal arrangement and it seemed to work with perfect satisfaction. There was, however, a notable exception, the case of Ananias and his wife, who were not prepared to make full returns of their property and suffered accordingly the severest penalty, that of death.

Outside of certain religious orders of the church and a few communities like the late

Economite society of Pennsylvania this form of socialism no longer exists. In the case of the religious communities it works well, for the reason that the members are inspired by the same motives as were the first Christians; wherever else it has been tried it has resulted in failure. No one dreams to-day of applying the theory and practice to society at large as a means of redressing its evils and inequalities. Far different remedies are proposed. To cure the evils of modern society the Socialist would do away with the cause,—private ownership in the means of production; private property he holds should be abolished and individual possessions should become the common property of the State.

Now it is worth while to examine briefly this theory of socialism. Let me call attention at once to a few plain principles. They may help to set us right. Here is one: Man has a natural right to life and to the means by which his life and his posterity may be preserved. This right is inalienable and goes before any right which the State may claim over him. The family of which man is the head is in itself a perfect society, and forms the organized unit of which civil society is composed. But land and the means of production form the chief natural means by which man preserves his life and

transmits living to his posterity. Hence, man has a perfect natural right to land and the means of production. The land which he has cultivated, and the instruments which he has made become as it were identified with himself. He has a right to possess them securely, to exclude all others, and to hand them down to his children. But this is private ownership of the means of production; and hence man has a right to private ownership in the means of production.

It will not do to say that the earth and the fulness thereof have been given to the whole human race; and, therefore he who owns a part robs all the rest. The earth, it is true, has been given to the whole human race, but individual ownership depends upon occupancy, intention to use, cultivation, work, and such other human actions as make for rational division.

Again, if private ownership in the means of production were once abolished, the world's order and thrift would vanish. Man's strongest incentive to work is selfishness. He puts forth his best energies only to increase for himself and family his private store of wealth, happiness, or glory. With the abolition of private ownership in the means of production the opportunity of producing for private exchange would disappear and human energy be-

come stagnant. The ploughman would no longer till the soil, the miner use his drill, nor the woman her needle. Dullness, listlessness and idleness would be found everywhere.

Furthermore: Every man in this country is entitled according to the Declaration of Independence to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. He has a right, moreover, to self-improvement; to the developing and perfecting of his faculties whether in the department of knowledge or of virtue. He has a right to food and clothing; to the shelter of a home; to occupation and to permanency in the possession of what he has acquired by his labor. Permanency of possession is an essential point because this gives at once a stimulus to endeavor and to the attainment of proper earthly ambition. Now under the socialistic theory this permanency would be removed and consequently all would go that makes life worth living; liberty worth having; or happiness anything more than a name.

It is well to consider also that if the theories of the Socialists were carried out the working-man would be among the first to suffer. For without property he cannot exercise his innate rights to personal comforts, to the pursuits of happiness and to the development of his faculties. Who would till the fields if some one had

a right to step in and reap the harvest? A man must provide for the future and therefore he has a right to lay by something for a rainy day. He must have the wherewithal, not only for his present needs, but must put something aside for the future. What is the theory of wages but that a man gives the sweat of his brow, his skill and his labor in order that he may get something in return?

Now, suppose that a man receives enough not only to provide for to-day, but, by frugality and economy, to lay aside a sufficient amount of money to buy a small piece of ground. What is this ground? It represents what he has earned by the sweat of his brow; it is a part of his salary, a part of the money he has worked hard to gain. Assuredly, therefore, he has the right to dispose of that ground in any way that he pleases, because by his own personal labor he has acquired it. Therefore, when Socialists say that property should be transferred from the individual to the State or the community they strike a direct blow at the liberty of the workman. It is undeniable that a man by having this right to dispose of his wages as he wishes and to possess property is much better off under the present system than he would be under such a system as is urged by Socialists, because under

their rule whatever a man acquires must pass not to himself but to the community.

The evils of society are great, and need not be magnified. But the betterment of the workingman and the happiness of the poor lie not in the destruction of private property, of the family, religion, and the State, but in education, in virtuous living, in the organization of labor for the enforcement of its just demands.

With the philosophy of patience, with Christian fortitude, bearing cheerfully the share of suffering which cannot be avoided, man can make of this earth, if not Utopia, at least a home of peace and contentment.

Nor should it be forgotten that the heart of the Church is always with the honest workingman. In every age from the days of the Apostles the Church has supported and blessed his labors and pleaded for his just rights. And that is her position to-day. She holds to the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man. She preaches the true doctrine of liberty, equality, and fraternity. And were it possible she would restore our modern world to that ideal state of the first Christians wherein "distribution was made to every one according to his need and there was no one needy among them."

MONEY-MAD.

“Justice exalteth a nation; but sin maketh nations miserable.” *Prov. xiv. 34.*

LET me remark, at the start, that as individuals or nations lose sight of heaven they become more deeply engrossed with the affairs of earth. In their greed of gain men voluntarily submit to “hard labor” that human justice only imposes on dangerous criminals. The business man too often sacrifices everything, health, comfort, the pleasures of home, rest, even life itself, to the desire for wealth. He sees in our American life that wealth is the open door to social distinction; and he longs to be distinguished. The rich, the world over, have one appetite, the craving to be counted among the elect. It is not often one hears a rich and successful man of business utter this plain truth: “Life is not summed up in the accumulations of riches. One may be happy, though poor. I know that, for I was happy when I had but five dollars a week. There is much satisfaction in this world in work well done.” Life is not worth living if one becomes the slave of business in the effort

to get riches. In this country we have set up a false standard, and men have gone mad in the race for wealth. The craze affects the business man in our small towns quite as much as it does those who live in the great cities and marts of trade. Out in the country village store men are to-day stirred to envy and the desire for wealth when they read of the costly entertainments, the big dinners, the dazzling opera parties of our merchant princes and captains of industry. We are wholly wrong in making wealth our criterion. As long as we do that we shall grow more and more deceitful in business; the daily list of frauds, defalcations, forgeries, embezzlements, suicides and crimes will go on increasing until the time may come when we shall have forgotten the divine prohibition: "Thou shalt not steal." Just because we are following this false idol we are fast putting conscience out of business; we regard it as "a dangerous thing." There are too many people in business to-day who seem to have resolved that they will have nothing to do with it as the murderer resolved in Richard III., and for the same reasons: "A man cannot steal but it accuseth him. 'Tis a blushing, shamefaced spirit that mutinies in a man's bosom; it fills one full of obstacles; it is turned out of all towns and cities as a dangerous thing; it beggars any man

that keeps it." Are we coming to that in our business methods? Let us see. Here are a few examples that may come under the observation of anyone who knows some of the ways of our business and professional life: A butcher is approached by a new cook for a family which he has long served. She demands \$5 a month or their meat will be purchased elsewhere. He refuses since the family are old customers of his; she says she will get it or take away his trade. He still refuses and she burns or spoils the meat prepared for the table. The lady of the house writes to the butcher to know why the quality of his meat has deteriorated; and when he seeks an interview and explains the reason she says: "That is nothing to me. I can get a butcher any day, but a good cook is hard to find. Make it right with the cook, and I don't want to hear any more about it." He gives the cook her \$5 and makes the bill \$7 larger.

Take another instance: A young architect is approached by a manufacturer of bricks, who promises him a per cent if he will induce his clients, who are building a large block, to use his brick in their houses. He refuses. But how many architects demand such toll? A druggist in a certain town offers a physician a percentage on all perscriptions sent to his store. He knows it is a very common practice, but he

refuses as a man of honor. He is asked to take stock at a very nominal rate in land companies in North Carolina, with house lots thrown in, if he will only send his patients to this place. He knows that this is done by a neighboring physician.

Clergymen and churches even are almost daily solicited with tempting offers and big discounts if they will influence their congregation to patronize this or that store, or call for this or that brand of soap or coffee. Thus it goes. The taint of fraud and deceit infects all classes of business or professions that claim honorable rules or traditions. The old maxim that honesty is the best policy is often discarded. In fact dishonesty has become so prevalent a sin, from the sale of a railroad to the purchase of a pound of sugar that it is hardly taken account of any more in business transactions. All one looks out for is to escape, not moral but legal punishment, the jail. And because we have banished conscience from many lines of business, truthfulness and good faith, honesty and fair dealing, security, integrity and honor are fast disappearing from the great marts and centres of commercial and business life. How often have we heard it said that "an honest, conscientious man can no longer succeed in business." There was a time when conscience

reigned supreme and honor was the very soul of business activity. The time was when a man's word was as good as his bond; to-day it is becoming difficult to prepare a bond that will hold the crooked man straight.

Now, it should be the aim of the moralist and preacher to bring business men back to the methods and practices of honest men. Let me describe in a few words the honest merchant. He is, above all, a man of conscience; he has a sacred regard for the principles of justice; he deceives no customer by lying; he tells the truth and prospers; his is the one-price store; his word is better than another man's oath; though ever so rich he owns no wicked dollar; all is openly, honestly earned. He is just with the weak as well as with the strong; he takes advantage of no one; his counting room or store room is the sanctuary of fair dealing and justice; industry and honor go hand in hand with him; he gets rich, but no one becomes poorer because he is rich; he does not boast of nor advertise his justice and honesty; there is no need, for men see it; his profession of religion is not colored by any thought of gain; he consecrates his life and his business to the service of God and his fellow-man; he looks out for the welfare of his employés; if they are his help, he is theirs; he helps the weak to help themselves; he is, in fine,

a great moral force in the community — a saint in trade.

We thank God that there are many such men to be found in every business centre of the land. Would that they were more numerous! Would that they could stir others to be like themselves! They stand clean amid the dust of trade and commerce; they prosper, but riches have not hardened their hearts; they are true to the light within them in all their dealings; hence heaven's blessing rests upon them and the works of their hands. They are the ideal captains of industry, the true princes of trade and commerce. May their tribe increase!

THE CLOTHES OF RELIGION.

“Unless your justice abound more than that of the Scribes and Pharisees you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” *St. Matthew v. 20.*

WHAT a surprise it must have been to the congregation to hear these words of the great Teacher. It was a startling announcement. It reversed all previous notions of Jewish sanctity; for were not these two classes the most exemplary and consistent members of the synagogue? The Scribes were the official expounders of the law, men whose very office required them to put in practice the precepts which it taught; while the Pharisees were a body of men who engaged to keep every jot and tittle of the law. And yet their religion, their method of life, irreproachable as it seemed to be, was pronounced to be insufficient by the Saviour for gaining the kingdom of heaven. It was made very plain to them that those who were to attain to eternal life must do better. What was wrong with the justice and sanctity of these Jewish saints? Have we in our Christian churches to-day a corresponding class, men and

women who are regraded as excellent church members, but who, in reality, are wanting in the spirit and essential elements of religion? Let us see how it was with the Scribes and Pharisees. It is quite clear that these two classes of men stood high in the public esteem; that they were looked upon as the very best people by the society in which they lived. They were saluted in the market place and in the public streets; men and women were proud to know them or to be counted among their friends. To them were given the first places at all feasts and public gatherings. When people addressed them it was with the title "Rabbi" or master. Their lives elicited from others these tokens of respect, for they kept with the most minute exactitude all the requirements of the Mosaic law. Therefore, naturally enough, they were regarded as the saints of the Jewish Church.

How, then, did it happen that the gentle Saviour took so different a view? It was because He looked beneath the surface. He knew that all that glitters is not always gold; that as the brightest gold is not always the purest, so the apparent excellence of those men's lives did not correspond with the sentiments of their hearts; it was but the outward seeming of what they pretended to be. It was more brilliant than solid

and had more surface than depth ; in fact, it was but a mask covering a maimed, distorted, hideous figure. Hence their justice and sanctity counted for little in God's sight. For they kept only some points of the law, but not all that it required from them. Whatever it commanded that chanced to be in accordance with their natural instincts they were careful to observe ; but whatever it prescribed that ran counter to their prejudices, their interests and passions, they without scruple set aside. They were careful to keep all points of ceremonial, but overlooked the most important, the essential precepts of the law. Moreover their motives were anything but pure. Their aim was not so much to please God, but rather to win the good will and applause of their fellowmen. If they gave gifts or benefactions they took care that the fact should be known to the whole city. There were no newspapers in those days to print their pictures and give a graphic account of their philanthropy ; but they had other means of making known to the public their liberality. They fasted often and prayed a great deal, mostly in public ; this too was done with an eye always fixed on the esteem it would likely win from others. Their religious life, in short, was external rather than internal. They wore the clothes of religion, but were sadly lacking in

its spirit. They were actors, men playing a part, living a life not really their own.

Hence the gentle Saviour penetrating their hearts and motives, called them, what they in truth were, hypocrites. They appeared to men to be humble, but they were full of pride. They seemed to be charitable and benevolent, but the very opposite vices sat enthroned in their hearts. They had the reputation of being pure and chaste, but in many instances they were the slaves of lust. They were clothed like sheep, but in spirit they were ravening wolves. Such was the justice or sanctity of these Jewish saints. It was for the most part all outward show. Hence the bitter condemnation of the merciful, tender Saviour. He had, as we say, no use for such religion. Nor did they think well of Him. They questioned the truth of His teaching. They murmured against Him. They set themselves against His teaching. They said His miracles were wrought through the agency of Satan. They found fault with His treatment of sinners. They went so far as to proclaim Him an enemy of the law and of God, because He did some work of mercy on the Sabbath Day. Such was the religion of this class of Jews in Christ's day — a religion very beautiful on the surface, but worthless in God's sight; good, so far as it went, but insufficient

and hopeless, because it did not go far enough; not pleasing to God because it was based on self-sufficiency and resulted in self-satisfaction.

Now, the justice that as a key will unlock the gates of the heavenly kingdom must be entirely different from all that. It must exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees. It must be a complete, not a partial, justice; it must be based on pure motives. For this is the only kind that can find favor with God. How is it with the bulk of Christians in our day? Do we not find among some of them the counterpart of those Jewish saints? To be sure, men profess a great deal, boast that they are Christians and speak of Christianity as the religion of the heart; but when we put aside words and professions and try to discover what their religion is, do we not find that many get rid of all religion that is inward; that they lay little or no stress on acts of faith, hope and love; on simplicity of intention, purity of motive; that they confine themselves to two or three virtues, superficially practiced; that they think and say that, after all, if a man does his duty in the world he cannot fail to get to heaven? Thus a business man's duty is honesty; an artisan's duty is industry and contentment; of a gentleman are required veracity, courteousness and self-respect; of a public man, high principled ambition; of a woman, the

domestic virtues; of a minister of religion, decorum, benevolence and edifying living; of a rich man, consideration and charity toward the poor. Now, all these are instances of mere Pharisaical excellence; of the religion of the natural man in every age and place. Our virtue must rise higher than that to be acceptable to Almighty God. It must be something more than mere natural goodness. Let us take a case: Here is a rich man, let us suppose he has made his millions honestly, who lavishly pours out his wealth upon the poor; he endows schools and hospitals; he builds libraries, art galleries and museums; he leads in every work of public philanthropy. These are undoubtedly good works, meritorious works, and deserving a great reward. If, however, the doer of them seeks only the applause of men; if they are not done from a pure motive, then they are worthless in the sight of God. And this man's justice does not exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees. Over in London they think we have some professing Christians of this class right here in America. Perhaps we have.

TWO MAGIC WORDS.

“Everyone shall help his neighbor, and shall say to his brother: Be of good courage.” *Isaias xli. 6.*

ONE of the favorite words of our age is power. We are constantly using it, applying it to persons and things, to individuals and nations. It has a moral as well as a physical meaning that is in every day use.

We no longer dread the forces of nature; we have to a great extent brought them under our control; we have learned to subjugate the fiery steeds and hitch them to our chariot, to carry us safely and with lightning speed across earth and sea and do our bidding; we have turned the rays of the sun and the vast energy of Niagara into sources of human power; we rate men and nations, the trades and sciences, even knowledge and character, by the power they wield. Power has become with us the measure of greatness. Hence the effort everywhere to attain it.

But after all there is something crude and selfish in this universal strife and struggle for power that we see going on around us. For where there is victory, the attainment of power,

on one side there is always defeat on the other. Every success here implies failure there. Power can be no end in itself; for it may be used well or misused; it may become the means of uplifting or of crushing others. It is too often used for the latter purpose. Power is a trust and should be used accordingly. A trust in the good sense; for it emanates from a higher Power which is benign and just. It is given to God's children for help, not for harm. It should, then, since it is a gift of heaven, prove a source of strength for the weak and feeble. It should not overawe and destroy, but protect and save the powerless.

How often must it be told that the greatness of our age consists not in the powerful machinery we have invented; nor in the mighty steam and electric forces which proclaim man's dominion over nature; nor in the great organizations of labor and capital that make the achievements of vast enterprises possible; nor even in those intellectual forces, such as science, literature and the press which interlink the lands and nations of the earth and unify the world. No; our greatness must consist in a deep spiritual current underlying and directing all the movements and aims of our age. Over against that favorite word power we must set the word "responsibility," and in the recesses of all hearts

we must make "the still, small voice" of conscience ring responsive to it. Then every human woe that comes to our notice; every condition of wretchedness that we encounter; the fierce social struggles and the exasperating labor strikes which we watch with bated breath will hold before our minds with ever greater impressiveness the lesson of responsibility.

True, in our everyday experience we are inclined to regard power as the means of controlling life for selfish purposes and each privilege as the opportunity of personal enjoyment and ease. The man or woman who stands at the top of the social ladder is, as a rule, regarded by those beneath as one who has great resources of pleasure and mighty advantages for personal aggrandizement, and therefore, he or she becomes an object of envy and jealousy, if not of malice and hatred. Nor can it be denied that the great majority of men are so prompted by selfish aims and motives as to be ever eager to abuse power and privilege by indulgence in passion and greed. On the other hand, the less fortunate, no less guided by narrow, selfish feelings, behold in this inequality of life the favoritism of Providence and rebel against this cruelty of fate. This is an altogether erroneous view. There are no favors in God's world that do not involve also greater obligations. Each privilege we en-

joy means another duty. Every power we obtain imposes upon us some new responsibility. There is no such a thing as equality in life. Nature did not fashion all flowers and trees alike. Its beauty consists in its variety of form and color, and its contrasts of high and low, of strong and feeble. Neither are all men moulded alike, physically or intellectually; otherwise human existence would be bereft of all charm, of all ambition.

There is only one way of explaining and justifying the contrasts of life. "Let not the wise glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty glory in his might, nor let the rich glory in his riches; but let him that glories glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord who exercises loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord."

Every distinction in rank and power, greater wealth and more wisdom, must mean higher tasks, greater responsibilities. Every privilege granted must awaken a keener sense of duty and assert a stronger claim of helpful love and protection for the less privileged. Mutuality is the magic spell of happiness; it should be the watchword, the message of the age. Life is ever assuming a new meaning for us. The upper classes should not idle away their time in

mere pleasure seeking, shutting their eyes to the misery and wretchedness of those huddled together in the filthy tenement quarters of our cities, and asking with Cain, "Am I the keeper of my brother?" They should learn the lesson of responsibility. They should not in false conceit hold aloof from the poor waif of the street whose ignorance and shame are sure to become a source of peril to themselves.

Responsibility should become the rallying cry of the privileged classes throughout the land, throughout the world. The wide gulf yawning between the rich and poor, the high and the humble, between the enlightened and the ignorant, everywhere clamors for heroic actions to counteract the physical and moral corruption exhaling its deadly poison among the poverty-stricken and threatening the safety and the purity of every home and every life. We rejoice in thinking that our charity and education are becoming ever broader and deeper; that we are growing more eager to study and supply the needs of all; and even when dealing with crime we are less ready to condemn, but prepared to investigate the conditions that caused it and share in the blame cast upon society, of which we are members as well as the transgressor.

And this principle of responsibility is at work also we believe in bringing labor and capital ever

closer together. Linked together by mutual interests, they cannot fail to make that higher union their aim which seeks the peace and welfare of all classes alike, of every home in the land, of every child of God. Unions or corporations that crush individual skill and enterprise are tyrannical powers void of soul, void of love. Let responsibility for all and each become the leading principle, and power becomes a tower of strength, a protection for all.

HOW WE CAN HELP.

“And who is my neighbor?” *Luke x. 29.*

STRANGE that there was need to put such a question. For at the time it was asked the commandment which called it forth was an old commandment. It had lived through centuries and had exerted its power. It had worked, however, within narrow limits. It needed broadening. That in its application it was narrow was not due to limitations set upon it by the divine Lawgiver, but to the false interpretation put upon it by those who accepted it. They forgot its primitive, world-wide application to men of all races and creeds. As time went on it had lost, even among those who preached it as one of the primary religious laws of man's being, much of its meaning. A restricted interpretation had almost begotten a false interpretation. In the question and answer given in the gospel the old faces the new interpretation. They stand in striking contrast; not, indeed, so much a contrast of opposition as of development. That portion of the truth, crystallized in this great commandment, which had been kept

amongst the Jewish people was not sacrificed, but it was built upon forming a part of the structure of Christianity. As the remnant of some ancient temple with its stones and pillars weather-beaten and displaced, yet remaining majestic in their strength and solidity, affords material for another and greater edifice, so does the ancient law underlie the power and beauty of the new.

“And who is my neighbor?” Jesus answers the Hebrew inquirer by saying: “Every man: even the Samaritan: even the one you regard as farthest separated from you: even the one whom you look upon as an outcast, cut off from you in traditions, customs, and religion,—even he is your neighbor.” With this answer a strong light pierced into new regions and revealed hidden depths. Henceforth the one who would be a godly man must realize that he is bound to the highest and the lowliest; the richest and the poorest; the strongest and the weakest; the happiest and the most wretched; the best and the worst of mankind. The great truth, therefore, of universal kinship is preached by the Master; but in an especial way He insists that the circumstance which should call forth an expression of neighborly love is the need of our fellowman. All are our neighbors, but more than others, those who stand appealing for what we can give

of our possessions. The social, the intellectual, the spiritual conditions of the world to-day reveal the application of this parable in a special manner to our lives. The needs of man are numerous; the consequent duties of Christian charity are various.

Now in the first place our neighbor is he who stands in need of physical comfort and assistance. The poor traveler, beset by misery and suffering has his counterpart to-day in the sick, the poverty-stricken, the physically afflicted. Those who before the announcement of the great law of Christian charity, were despised of men; who were driven from the resorts where health and pleasure rule; who were regarded as outcasts; to-day in the light of this law of love they are our brothers having a claim upon our attention and care. While centuries of Christian civilization have changed the world to a degree, which we generally fail to appreciate, and have bettered it to an extent beyond our usual recognition, there still remain grievous conditions of physical want and suffering that call for the manifestation of the Samaritan spirit. While Christian teachings have begotten a respect for human dignity and worth, unknown to the past, there is still room for growth and development. While the contempt for labor and the violent contrasts between wealth and poverty have been

eradicated, the Christian law of charity can better still more the social life of the working-man. While through the efforts of Christianity the poor have been accorded new privileges and have received new attention; while woman has been raised from her degradation and has received a position unknown to the civilizations of the past; while children have been trained and educated in the principles of virtue and have been removed to a great extent from the influences of ignorance and of vice; yet to-day, in the life around us, there is still need of greater effort and also the consequent duty of the Christian to extend the helping hand, to lift human beings to a higher and better plane of living.

Consider for a moment, the conditions that surround us, especially in our great cities, and no powerful light is needed to reveal the possibilities of social betterment, through active charity. It is true, beneficent institutions are erected, charitable organizations are formed; individuals rich in the goods of this world are constantly setting aside large sums of money for the alleviation of misery; but the great majority of the rich go through life selfishly considering their own interests alone and blinding themselves to the extended hand and the appealing eye. They pass by the stricken one, not because they would not pity; not because they

would not help but chiefly because they do not think. Theoretically they admit the Christian law. Before the world they proclaim their faith in Christ and His teaching. Practically they are no more Christians than the pagans of old. The social degradation which some teachers of economics hold to be a consequence of indiscriminate giving may be a fact; yet it is to be feared that this theory has afforded to many only a plea for giving naught. The good Samaritan must seek and find the opportunities for administering unto the wants of others. He must see and know the conditions about him that he may be able to act wisely and well. Are we doing this? We who are blessed with an abundance of God's gifts.

"Who is my neighbor?" Again, the answer comes: He who stands in intellectual need. Sadder than the condition of those who suffer from material want is that of the mind that is poor in knowledge and wisdom. We speak not so much of that wisdom which is natural and worldly, but of that higher wisdom which is of God. Beyond doubt, there is, in our day, a great duty imposed upon all Christians, upon parents especially, and upon the Church, to attend to the instruction of the young in the essentials of divine truth, and to afford them every opportunity for such knowledge. The one who

starves a child's mind commits as great a crime as the one who deprives him of bread. The duty we speak of is largely one of charity. It should be exercised toward the mind which, perhaps, may be very wise in worldly things but very ignorant in the knowledge of God. There are all around us many such persons. Indifferentism, skepticism, infidelity, are various forms of this disease, but the one common symptom is a lack of that knowledge which comes through divine Faith; a non-acceptance of Christian truth, and sometimes even a most bitter hatred of it. Do we need to seek far for such, for souls that are wandering widely from religious truth; for minds that are tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine? They are very close to us; we find them daily in the various relations of social and commercial life. They are indeed our neighbors; and toward them we have a duty of charity; namely, to bring to their minds the beauty and the truth of the knowledge of God. As the duty of almsgiving is incumbent particularly upon those who have an abundance of material possessions, so this other duty rests especially upon the educated and the spiritual-minded.

It is plain, therefore, that the parable of the good Samaritan brings home to all Christians a lesson appropriate to the conditions around us.

To extend the helping hand to those in need, whether that need be material, moral, intellectual or religious, this is the duty that we must fulfill. Thus we learn the lesson that gives a meaning and beauty to Christian life; thus we follow the blessed behest of the Good Samaritan who said to each one of His followers: "Go thou and do likewise."

THE VOYAGE OF LIFE.

“Thy rowers have brought thee into great waters; the east wind hath broken thee in the midst of the seas.” *Ezekiel xxvii. 26.*

IN the chapter from which the text is taken the pleasure loving city of Tyre is compared to a ship. At first, splendid, proud, gallant, and then dismantled, struggling, lost. “Broken by the seas in the depths of the waters.” There follows the bitter wailing of those who have suffered loss or bereavement, and so the story ends.

The contrast between the two conditions of the ship is no greater than what we often meet with in human life; one that is not seldom seen.

Multitudes of young men are daily leaving our schools and colleges; they are entering upon life; they are making a fair start upon their voyage, with every prospect of success. They have talent, energy, health and friends; apparently the winds are favorable, the sea smooth, no clouds fleck the horizon. But as time passes one sees them drifting from the shore out into the deep, dark, troubled waters, where are the tempest, the whirlpool and destruction. The talents

are soon squandered, the advantages wasted, the career blasted, the soul all but wrecked.

What with the ever increasing hours of leisure and the more liberal wages; what with the laxity of parental oversight and the blandishments, pretences and tinsel of vice; what with the prevailing leniency toward wrongdoing and the widespread indifference to the restraints of religion, we need not be surprised when we are told that there has recently been an enormous growth in crime, especially among the young.

We ask whence it springs?

In the text the wreck appears to have been attributable to "the rowers." Who, then, are these rowers?

We may, in the first place, regard them as one's companions.

Our companions exercise a powerful influence over us, unconscious though it may be. Our nature is social; we form friendships, and then we are swayed by them. It is very difficult to stand out against the current and the tide. A group of college boys together will engage in follies and evil practices which no one of their number would think of committing alone. The cry is "Be a man!" and the poor weakling, with blinded eyes and a false conception of manliness, plays "the fool." One cunning knave among hard-worked clerks or poverty-stricken laborers

will entangle them all in the mesh of dishonest schemes, clever hypocrisies and ruinous lies. That we see done every day. An idle set of fast young men can conceive crimes, lay plans, perform deeds, which not one of them could work out by himself, which will cast humiliation upon a whole community and wreck perhaps the lives of all concerned.

If you make companions of the depraved, you will end in being yourself depraved. "Live with the wolves," says the Spanish proverb, "and you will learn to howl." Mental power is not proof against such influences. It was the wild smuggler boys of Kirkoswald, it is said, who led Burns astray. Call not that man a friend who, while he takes his stand by your side, shoulder to shoulder, is yet tempting you to destruction. From such false friends may the good God deliver us!

Again, these "rowers" may be regarded as a man's own appetites.

God has planted certain instincts and propensities in our nature, and they have their place in the economy of our being. We must eat and drink and be bound together in domestic relations. Herein is a natural joy of life. But God punishes excess; our desires and passions have definite limitations and are to be always kept under strict control; they are to be sub-

ordinate, not supreme. . Nature has her laws, and when they are infringed she punishes without hesitation and without remorse.

Excess is sin. Excess is weakness. Excess is death. Cæsar sought happiness in dominion, Brutus in glory, Antony in love. The first found ingratitude; the second reproach; the last disgrace; and each destruction, because each went to excess. As a result of yielding to the lower nature we may read in any issue of the daily press a long list of crimes; a youth robbing his employer; a girl deserting her home; children casting off their parents; a wife leaving her husband; young men guilty of betrayal, desertion and even murder. Possibly not one of these misguided persons intended wrong. As they look back over their paths they are bewildered as they try to recall the first false step. It seems like a frightful nightmare as they review the events which led, little by little, to the havoc of to-day. Doubtless the whole history might be summed up in one sentence; "the rowers swept them on." Desire, appetite, lust were uncontrolled, and thus came ruin. When the weakened ship passes out into the deep sea the waves beat her, the winds toss her, the floods open her crevices, the waters rush in and the ship goes down. Then follows bitter lamentation.

Let me show you a picture. An infirm and broken hearted woman sits to-day in her chamber alone. Mechanically she turns the leaves of an old, worn prayer book. It has been in her family for generations, but of late years has not been much used. She tries to read, but the page is blurred and blotted. She holds the book close to her eyes, poor eyes, so dimmed with age and weeping; she pronounces the words aloud with slow precision, "The Lord is loving unto every man, and His mercy is over all His works." But her overwrought brain cannot comprehend the meaning; the book falls from her nerveless grasp, while the hot tears pour down the ashen face.

Can you wonder at her agony? It is her boy who is accused of a terrible crime; her boy, so young and handsome and winning; her boy, who has held positions of trust and honor. He is locked up like a common felon, and she knows not what the end may be. That is a picture not only of one, but of many mothers in any of our large cities to-day. Pity them and pray for them!

Are not the lessons then very plain? Let the young men and women learn them: avoid evil associates, curb your appetites, keep under your bodies and bring them into subjection. Listen to Napoleon, better adviser than exemplar, as

he admonishes his brother, King Joseph, of Spain, "I have only one counsel for you: Be master."

If we wish to keep a straight course in the voyage of life we must carry with us a compass, a chart, an anchor and a pilot. The compass is conscience; the chart is the moral law; the anchor is faith in God and the pilot is Christ Himself. With these we can not suffer shipwreck.

THE BEAUTY OF COMMON THINGS.

“The poor have the gospel preached to them.” *Matt. xi. 5.*

GOD’S greatest gifts are those that are most common. And this is true both in the natural and supernatural order. They are so common that they come to be lightly looked upon, or to be regarded as things so much a matter of course in their happenings that we persuade ourselves we have a sort of right to them. Look abroad upon the world. The greatest physical gifts that God has bestowed on man — what are they? They are not far to seek — the blessed light of heaven; the air that surrounds us; the water that is to be found almost at every turn. These are the things that are indispensable, not merely to human comfort, but even to human life. And these are precisely the things that everyone can have for nothing.

What are the most beautiful things in the world? Not, after all, the works of art, precious as these may be, but the common things that lie around us which the highest art aims only at representing. They have a beauty im-

planted in them by the Divine Artist deeper and more lasting than sculptor's chisel or painter's pencil can ever hope to reach. Ah! these common things — so common that they have become common-place and scarce an eye discerns the miracles of beauty they disclose. Let us look at a few of them. There is the sunrise. Stand in the gray dawn of morning and see the white light coming up behind the eastern hills, as if God had but newly said, "Let light be made;" see the purple and crimson clouds roll grandly up and the sunrise strike on field and flood. There is no grander spectacle in nature. Yet day by day for thousands of years the sun has risen on the world, has called to the labor of a new day untold generations; and it shall continue to rise as brightly when we, too, shall have closed our eyes to nature and its brightness.

The sunset, too, how solemn and how grand it is! A thing which, if it were to happen only once, would leave of its unearthly beauty a memory that would never die. But, every evening, of all the evenings that have been, the glory of the sunset has crowned the western hills; and it is so common that not one in a hundred ever pauses on his homeward way to think and say how beautiful it is. God has made the world and has left the mark of His divine hand so deeply set on it, and has flung around its sights

and scenes so many a shadow of His own divine beauty, that not even amid the corruption and decay that sin has caused can the traces of God's beauty be obscured. As long as the stars glisten in the firmament; as long as the sun rises and shines and sets; as long as the trees blossom and the flowers bloom and the seas lie calm or stormy, so long will all these things remind anyone, who looks at them with a clear vision of the existence and omnipresence of the great Being who made them all when they first began to be, and who keeps them and shall keep them in their several places until the world itself shall die. So the world bears indelible traces of its Maker, and of these traces the most definite and unmistakable are found in the things that are so common that we scarcely think them at all wonderful or specially beautiful.

Let us look at the common things in the supernatural order. Here is a thing that goes on constantly which is very common and perhaps not much noticed, but yet was intended by our blessed Lord to be the thing of all others that was to be a most striking proof of His own divine mission. It is contained in the words: "The poor have the gospel preached to them." The poor in the various degrees of poverty have always been and will always be the vast majority of the human race. Before the coming of

Christ the world regarded poverty as the greatest curse that could befall a human being. As long as men had no great knowledge or no great belief about a future life; as long as they were stumbling on in pagan blindness, seeing, believing, hoping nothing beyond the present gratification of their five hungry senses; so long as death appeared to them the end of all it was no great wonder that poverty should be regarded as a curse and a doom. But the gospel opened up a view of an eternal world beyond the grave, and then it began to be seen that poverty was no such evil as men had been in the habit of considering it.

Again, the world that dreaded poverty so much was busy about many things; about wealth and honor and pleasure and power; trade and commerce; about philosophy, art and literature. With the world holding such views and so engrossed there was no place for the poor; they had no real business in the world. But in this respect the blessed Saviour brings good news: "Only one thing necessary." "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?"

Think of this truth preached to the poor, and it is a common everyday thing in our Christian churches! What a revolution it is calculated to effect in their condition! They are no longer

miserable; at any rate, they need not be. The great prize of life is not beyond the reach of toilworn hands; the poor can save their souls,

Furthermore, the world was prone, and is still prone to say, when it puts into words its notions about happiness: "Happy is the man who is rich and powerful; admirable is the man of high spirit, sensitive to feel and prompt to repel an insult or injustice; enviable is the life of ease which wealth makes smooth and honors crown and friendship and affection bless." Well, what does the great Teacher say? This: "Blessed are the poor spirit; blessed are the meek; blessed are they that mourn"—commonplace teachings of His Gospel. Here then, we have on the one hand the opinion of the world and on the other hand the opinion of Christ. Which shall we follow?

A GOLDEN TRUTH.

“Who art thou?” *St. John i. 19.*

It is told that amongst the ancient philosophers one day the question was debated: What man would have to do in order to lead a good life and attain to happiness? One maintained that to be good and happy man must control his temper. And that was an excellent suggestion, though not the right answer. A second philosopher held that one must be careful in his speech and actions. A third said, that to lead a good life one should keep all his affairs in good order; have his will properly drawn; his life insurance attended to; those partnership papers arranged; the transfer of his property to his wife duly executed, and all other things of moment well ordered. A fourth insisted that the best means for leading a good and happy life is to know one's self. And after the others had heard this last man's reasons they at once agreed with him. It is said that then and there these old philosophers resolved, as a perpetual remembrance of this accepted truth, that the words “Know thyself” should be engraven

upon the temple of their pagan god, Apollo, so that all might see them. The words contain a golden truth, the substance of the highest philosophy, and should not only be inscribed upon a marble tablet in the temple or church, but also be deeply engraved upon our hearts.

At some solemn moment in our lives each of us puts to himself the question: "Who am I?" and the good and happiness of our living depend upon the answer. "Who art thou?" asked the messengers of the Jews from Jerusalem of John the Baptist. Mark the strange answer that this great preacher gave! He might well have said that he was a prophet, the precursor of the Messiah, or even the Messiah himself, but no, he merely calls himself, "the voice of one crying in the wilderness." Suppose one of us who has attained to some little distinction, a place of power or honor, were asked, "Who art thou?" What would likely be our answer? How few among us would answer with St. John: "I am like unto a voice which soon dies away leaving hardly an echo behind, since death makes a sudden end of my life, and after that it will be as if I had never been on this earth." Man cometh forth like a flower, writes Job, and is destroyed, and fleeth as a shadow, and never continueth in the same state. How few of the great men of the world are re-

membered after they have passed away! How seldom do we recall their deeds, even their very names? They are set down in school books for children's tasks and in history for students to think about. That is all. The great world goes on with its own affairs and leaves "the dead to bury the dead." Such is the end of human greatness. "Who art thou?" Let us hear the answer of Israel's greatest king. "I am a stranger and a sojourner as were all my fathers," replies David. Is it not strange that this mighty prince who had everything that goes to make up the happiness of man should call himself a stranger and look upon his kingdom, his scepter and crown, his great wealth and vast possessions, as things which were his only temporarily, like a visitor who to-day puts up at an inn, makes use of its conveniences, and next day goes forth upon his business. Like King David every one of us is only a sojourner upon this earth. For we have not here a lasting city, but we seek one that is to come. This truth should chasten us, should make us go slower in the mad race for wealth and the passing things of time which engross the energies of the men and women of this day. Just see what those around us, and we ourselves are doing. From early morn till late at night we see men who are the slaves of business; they know no rest; their

aim is to get rich; they are hoarding money as fast as they can; they allow themselves little comfort; they take their amusements even seriously; their nervous system is shattered; they cannot sleep nor eat; they work on, in this self-imposed slavery, to the breaking-down point, just as if they had to make provisions for hundreds of years to come. The end comes; their wealth goes to their children or heirs for whom it is not infrequently a curse rather than a blessing.

There are others who are bent on having what they call "a good time;" they give themselves to the pleasures of sense; they love fine dress; good eating and drinking; a constant round of gayety and entertainments, and idle pastime. There is but one article in their creed: and they seem to live up to it: "Let us eat, drink and be merry for to-morrow we die." They belong to what is called the "smart set" which is to-day found everywhere. Others again covet worldly honors and distinctions; they want to enter what is called "society" and they are quite unhappy if they do not succeed. If they are already within the charmed circle, they want to rise higher, and should they fail, as frequently must happen, they are filled with chagrin and envy.

What is one to think of such lives as these?

The people who are so living can hardly consider themselves as strangers upon this earth. It would seem as if they believed that they were to remain here forever; that they had here an abiding city. But no matter what they think, we know they are in reality only sojourners and must, whether they wish it or not, leave the shelter of this world when the Lord of life and death calls them.

That heathen philosopher answered right when he said "man is the prey of time." He and his works are subject to constant change and finally perish. "All flesh is grass," says the prophet, "and all the glory thereof as the flower of the field. The grass is withered, and the flower is fallen, because the spirit of the Lord hath blown upon it." There are notable instances set down in holy Scriptures like that of Job, telling us of the insecurity of earthly things. Here was a man of great wealth, of great power, of great good fortune that any one might envy. And see what happened. Within a short time he had lost everything; he was poor and naked, quite wretched and miserable; an object of derision even to his friends. It is not necessary, however, to look for examples in the olden times; our own experience shows us daily how man with all his works is but the prey of time. The other day I read of a man once

a millionaire dying in one of our alms-houses; I saw recently a maiden, fair as a rose, the charm and delight of her parents and friends, just recovered from a lingering illness, all her former grace and beauty gone forever. Down the street is a youth, strong and vigorous, the hope and stay of his parents in their old age, suddenly stricken by a fatal disease; his remains pass my window as I write, on the way to the narrow house of the dead. Thus man and the works of his hands perish, and we are forced to acknowledge the great truth that all is vanity and emptiness.

When the Roman Emperor, once showed to the king of Persia the City of Rome, with its stately palaces, its glorious monuments, its rich treasures of art, its magnificent public gardens, he expected words of admiration from his visitor, but the latter merely said: "This is all very fine, but I see that in Rome the people die, just as they do in Persia." Now, the lesson for all of us to learn, is this: that we should not become unduly attached to the passing things of time, but that we should busy ourselves to become rich in virtue and in the service of others. If thou must needs have peace and true happiness, thou must cast all else behind thee, says Thomas à Kempis, and turn thine eyes upon thyself alone. And he adds, "Thou wilt

fail exceedingly if thou set a value upon anything temporal." Our resolution then should be that given us by the Master: "To seek first the kingdom of God and its justice," with the assurance that all else that we need will be given unto us.

CHOOSING A LIFE WORK.

“The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places, for my inheritance is goodly to me.” *Psalms* xv. 6.

Is there such a thing as a vocation or special calling in life? If there be it is of supreme importance that each of us should find himself in the right place, in that profession or business for which we are best fitted and to which God has called us. There can be no success and little happiness unless it be so. Very many of the failures we see around us can be traced to a mistaken vocation. Here is a man who has never succeeded in business who would have made a first-class lawyer; that other man who is rather a poor preacher would have made an excellent business man. And so it goes. We see every day many misfits of this kind. We are constantly meeting and pitying those who are vainly struggling to get on. Most of them are in the wrong place; they missed their calling. A practical talk then to young people on this subject of vocation should prove timely. Let me observe in the first place, that every young man entering seriously upon

the duties of life should have before him a certain aim or goal which he wishes to reach; that in order to attain to certain success, he should choose a life work that he feels will be congenial to his tastes, education and capabilities. The selection of a life work, whether profession, business or trade, is an extremely important step in the career of every young man; for upon this selection depends in a great measure his future success and the happiness not only of himself but of others who may be dependent on him.

Now, it not unfrequently happens that a man rushes blindly and without consulting his adaptability or fitness into a certain line of business, attracted, mayhap, by a foolish caprice or the inadvertent advice of some irresponsible person, and after much time has been wasted in a vain endeavor to make the hoped-for progress, he is forced to abandon his undertaking and seek other employment. Parents, whose duty it is to watch over the well-being of their children, are sometimes much at fault in urging their sons into certain professions or lines of business without weighing well the expediency of the act or without consulting the wishes and approval of the one most seriously concerned in the matter,—the young man himself.

The familiar saying, "Be sure you are right

and then go ahead," is a wise and wholesome one, and is endorsed by experience. Numerous mistakes and failures in life are brought about from not following this prudent admonition. But how, it may be asked, is one rightly to determine upon the kind of employment which will be most suitable to one's tastes, and best to follow? How may a young man or youth, ignorant of the world's ways and the complexities of modern business and professional life, make a congenial and proper selection? In reply we should advise him to go first with humility and confidence to the Father of Light and ask, in earnest prayer, Him who is mindful of the fall of the sparrow and who never refuses what is good for us, to enlighten him as to the path in life he should choose and follow. The next step is to consult his own liking, his inclination, and examine strictly his capabilities for this or that special station in life. He should make a full and critical examination of the occupations, trades or professions which he might deem most suitable, and should try to discover that one to which he is most drawn and for which he is likely to be best fitted. He should inquire diligently from persons whom he can trust because of their good judgment and experience all that can be known about the business or the profession. He should analyze the

wishes and longings of his own mind, and after mature deliberation on the requirements of the different avocations which he thinks fitting to his dispositions, tastes, health, education, and circumstances make a final selection. And then with a firm will he should bend all his faculties to become a master in his chosen calling or business.

Too much forethought cannot be given to this most important subject; for upon the right selection future success and happiness largely depend. How foolish, it is, as too many do, to adopt as a life-calling or business that in which one feels little or no interest. How can one hope to succeed if his heart be not in the work? Where there's a will, there's a way. What we aim at, that we very often gain. Our aim must be as certain and sure as we can make it. Our entire will, the constant trend of our thoughts should be directed in the line of our work. Thus only may we hope to succeed. To-day in every business and profession there is the keenest rivalry and fiercest competition. A young man, therefore, must make the most strenuous efforts; must seize and hold fast the opportunities which present themselves to him; must be alive to all advantages as they occur. Neither must he be discouraged because of difficulties. There are three kinds of people: the "Wills,"

the "Won'ts," and the "Can'ts." The first effects everything; the second opposes everything, and the third fails in everything. Indecision and inaction are time-wasters. The mind should be fully made up to do the work in hand; one should steadily accomplish what is laid out for him to do and be not only spasmodically active, but continuously and perseveringly so. Lack of decision is a very destructive element of character, besides being the worker of great harm to him who is unfortunately possessed of it. Persons with whom you have dealings soon lose confidence in you, and begin to doubt whether you can even trust yourself; a confirmed loss of self-confidence is one of those evils that time can not always overcome. Always bear in mind the motto we mentioned above: "Be sure you are right and then go ahead." We can not remain supine and let things take their course, trusting that luck will help us to a good finish, for all successful issues are but the exponents of well-directed, hard, persevering work. Inactivity rarely brings us anything but confirmed laziness and a mean dependence on the exertions of others, a condition which no true spirited young man should tolerate.

Now there are two chief elements that in the race for success are sure to win: they are

strength and skill. Strength is the power of accomplishing something when directed by the will; the capability to work, the power to endure, the fixed purpose to carry through to a successful end whatever we have undertaken. Skill is the familiar knowledge of some art, business or trade, united with a readiness and dexterity in the application of the same. Weeks and months may go by and you may detect few results from the labor you have given; you need not despair, for persistent work will make its effects apparent in the end. Your hours of toil may have been profitless because they were not put to the proper use,—perhaps no deep-rooted purpose was underlying them, and hence unsatisfactory results. In opposition to a purpose in life and labor is idleness, or the condition of a person who does nothing. “Idleness,” it is said, “is the greatest prodigal in the world; it throws away that which is invaluable in respect to its present use, and irreparable when it is past, not to be recovered by any power of art or nature.” Generally we find those who do little or nothing complain that they have no time to accomplish that which they wish to do; but we may rest satisfied that it is not really the time, but the disposition for work, that is wanting.

There is a poem in which the devil is humor-

ously represented as fishing for men, and adapting his bait to the tastes and temperaments of his prey; but the idlers are the easiest victims, for they swallow even the naked hooks. Horace Greeley remarked that the darkest day in any man's career was that in which he fancied there was some easier way of getting a dollar than by squarely earning it. Choose, then, young man, your life work; choose it with care; choose a work that you feel you will love; a work to which you can bend your whole mind. Stick to it; learn its details thoroughly; learn everything about it. Aim at progress always; try ever to improve on former efforts. Above all things, strive to be just and faithful in all your transactions; place yourself continually under the care and guidance of your heavenly Father; endeavor by your work to please Him; seek to realize that all the success or wealth which you may eventually acquire will be but the means of ultimately gaining the greatest of all successes,—the approval of your own conscience and the blessing of Heaven. Thus you shall find that your lines are cast in pleasant places and that your inheritance is godly.

NO PLACE LIKE HOME.

“We make the world we live in; and we weave about us webs of good or ill, which leave their impress on our souls.” *Anon.*

PERHAPS there is no word in the whole language so dear to most of us as the word, Home. It is sweet music to the ear and presents a charming picture to the imagination. It calms and soothes the troubled heart. The word, Home, is like a box of precious ointment, whose fragrance fills one's whole life. Into it have been gathered the most sacred memories, the tenderest associations, the fondest hopes. It matters little whether the home has been a cottage on a sunny hillside or a house in a crowded quarter of a great city, round it everywhere is woven a romance of interest that grows with the years; to it, from distant places alike of work and thought, travels back the heart with tender recollection and wistful regret. As the years come and go we see our home through a golden mist where all things are beautiful and perfect, and we re-echo the sentiment of the ages that in all this boundless universe “there is no place

like home." All the joys of childhood; all the strong, deep affections of maturer years; all the calmness and peace of serene old age are associated with the idea of home. There is scarcely any life so cold and bleak as has not some faint recollections of home-life to rest upon. The artist who painted the picture, "Breaking Home Ties," gave expression to this universal clinging of the heart to the home and its sanctities. That painting appeals to everybody; to the young and the old; to the great and small, to the rich and poor; to all who are capable of human feeling and are touched by human sympathies.

The home is to society what the sanctuary is to the church,—the holiest and most sacred place on earth. One of our great needs in America at this time is more home-life,—more Christian homes. It is sad to think of the thousands who are deprived of the priceless blessings which the home, in the true Christian sense, alone can bring. The world which is to be a fairyland where all is perpetual spring and unclouded sunshine to the soul, is your own home, as you make it. After the salvation of one's soul, what is chiefly to be the end of every true man's effort is the building up and sanctifying of a home if he has none; or the maintaining and perfecting it in all honor, peace, prosperity

and happiness were one already exists. This is God's design, and should be the first and chief object of every true man's solicitude. While God and His angels are preparing an eternal home for those who do His will, they should while on earth be at work in rearing an image of that heavenly home where all should be "truth, love and happiness."

Now it is a solemn duty resting upon each member of the family to contribute his or her share to the happiness of the home. It does not suffice to do nothing to destroy the peace and harmony that should reign in every Christian household. More than a passive attitude is required; an active part is necessary. Let us never go to rest at night without asking ourselves the question: "What have I done to-day to make others happy? What have I added to the joys of home?" Should the answer be "Nothing," then we must reproach ourselves with a real fault. For this duty rests as we said upon every one and we must do a positive act each day, perhaps several of them, to lighten the burdens of those in the home; to smooth the wrinkles from father's brow; to bring a smile to mother's tired face; to encourage a sister just beginning the struggle of life; to calm a restless brother.

Life, and especially home-life, happy or un-

happy, is made up of little things. We should remember the words of Michael Angelo. When asked what he had done to a statue on which he had been working for many weeks with apparent little result, he answered, "I have chipped off a piece here and there." "But those are trifles!" exclaimed his friend. "Yes," replied the immortal artist, "those are trifles, but trifles make perfection, and perfection is no trifle!"

This saying aptly applies to the happiness or unhappiness found in our homes; for trifles are a great source of trouble and wrong; trouble and wrong destroy peace, and peace is the twin sister of happiness. Most of the causes of trouble and worry in the home are very slight. Father is a little late for supper or mother hasn't it quite ready; brother comes noisily in with muddy feet; or sister speaks a sharp word; immediately there is a heavy cloud. Or we express an opinion, and if all present do not agree with us how many useless, excited, even angry, words follow to prove that we are right and the others wrong! Why is it some of us are so often unkind to our own whom we sincerely love while we are very polite and amiable to strangers? To make our homes happy two things at least are needed. The first is prayer — family prayer — a perfect fidelity to morning and evening prayer.

Our Lord tells us to watch and pray lest we enter into temptation; with the grace that comes through prayer we can easily overcome the inclination to be irritable with our own; we can control ourselves and not "answer back," which is the source of much unhappiness in our homes.

The second powerful means of making our homes happy is to practice unselfishness. If we would only forget ourselves; learn to sacrifice our own little wishes and wants in order to please and satisfy others; to give up our own will when it does not make much difference one way or another, what a great change it would make in our homes! Thus with prayer and unselfishness our homes would be earthly paradises and we would realize in all their fullness the truth of the words in that most touching of all strains, "Home, sweet home; there is no place like home."

BEGIN AT HOME.

“And He came to Nazareth and was subject to them.”
St. Luke ii. 51.

THE biography of the Son of God differs from all other biographies ever written. It is not written as is the history of great men whose lives we daily read. We miss in it many details, over which a human, a merely human pen, would love to linger, but which the pen of the sacred writer, passing by utterly, invests only with the interest of a strange silence. Of a truth it is not only the things that are set down in the gospel narrative that are instructive, but also the things that have been left unwritten. The Holy Ghost does not write biographies as men would be inclined to think biography ought to be written. Our modern critics would find much to censure in the “Life of Christ.” They would tell us that there are great gaps in that life; that after the strange and stirring events of His birth a deep silence falls upon His life; that of His boyhood there is no record; not a vestige of history of His early manhood. Once and only once in all these years do we hear of

Him and then for a brief while, teaching in the Temple; and just when He seemed to be beginning His real work, His mother's voice calls Him away; calls Him home and we lose sight of Him altogether. The Mother claims her Child and has her claim allowed. He goes back to the little village of Nazareth and the story of His life up to His thirtieth year, where is it written? It is written nowhere upon earth save in the heart of Mary. For us, for the world, for all future time, the Holy Ghost sees fit to compress it all into the limits, of one brief sentence,—“He was subject to them.”

But in these few words, in the picture they give to a reflective soul of the life at Nazareth, there is a depth of teaching which might well be the foundation of a thousand sermons, each with its own proper lesson. But there is one very obvious lesson from this statement of the gospel. It is this: Jesus is preparing to overthrow the kingdom of Satan, the power of evil and the reign of injustice. How does He set about the work? He begins His preparation in the quiet obscurity of a humble home; He finds within the four walls of a mechanic's cottage, in the relations of duty which He had been pleased to contract towards two of His own creatures,—Mary and Joseph,—full scope for the exercise of every virtue of His sacred humanity. Why did

He do this? He evidently wished to lay deep, by the labor of thirty years, the foundation of that school where men and women might learn for all time to sanctify themselves for Him and the service of others,—the school of the Christian home; the home where those who bear command might have a likeness to Mary and Joseph; where children might grow from grace to grace, and virtue to virtue, after the model of the Child Jesus. That is the picture, in outline, of what the Christian home should be. It is well for us to recall it often. For, however grand the outward history; however glorious the traditions; however vast the trade and commerce; however great the development and prosperity; however mighty the political or even the religious achievements of a people may be, if their home-life, that life they lead when the door is closed upon their warmest friend and their closest acquaintance, and they take their place in their own families by their own fire-side; if the life there be not sweet and pure; be not hallowed by the virtues of home; be not, in its measure, somewhat like the life at Nazareth,—then, be that people's outward virtue what it may, it is surely hastening to social, political and religious decay. That is one obvious lesson suggested to us by the hidden life of

Christ.

And there is another that should come home to all of us: The Saviour came upon earth to do good, to overthrow evil, to confer upon the human race blessings which none but He could confer; He, with all His work before Him of redeeming and regenerating the race, chose to spend, in the obscurity of a small hamlet; in the daily duties of what would seem to us so narrow a sphere, thirty years out of a life that was limited to thirty-three. There was the highest and most perfect life that ever appeared on this earth; and yet it was lived within as small a compass and as narrow a round of duties as can possibly fall to the lot of the least of us. What a lesson for all! If we want to do good, let us not complain, as too many do, of the lack of opportunity. I say, "if we want to do good." Is it not our business to do good; to be of some service to others? What are we here for? Indeed the obligation of doing good is so generally acknowledged that no one is willing to admit that his life is utterly worthless. Every one will maintain that he is either doing, or imagines himself to be doing some good in the world. And there are some who, not satisfied with doing good for themselves and their families, will entertain lofty projects of doing good to society, to their town or city, their country, or even the whole race. This worthy am-

bition is found especially in youth, and it is, indeed, a gracious and a precious quality in youth. It occurs quite often in our own day, that when a young man looks out upon the world in whose work he is about to take part he sees many wrong, hateful, and unjust things being done daily; he feels his heart expanding with a love of justice and a hatred of oppression; he will at any rate glow with a desire to do battle for the oppressed and to raise up the fallen; to minister to the weak and erring; to hasten the reign of justice in the world. Now, these young men, ardent, unselfish, enthusiastic, even with their lofty dreams, their beautiful illusions, their impracticable projects, are the hope of the future; their hearts are hot with indignation at the oppression and injustice which they see or have imagined; they long to rush into the conflict, that they may make this bad world good by very force or compulsion, if needs be. Now to such noble youths let me say this:

“The feeling that prompts you is a high and noble feeling; hate injustice and wrong as much as you will; never can you hate them too much. You want to make the bad world good; it is a splendid aim. Cherish it as you cherish the apple of your eye. But remember this: I do not wish to discourage you — your voice is weak and your arm is not far-reaching enough; you

may shout and strike till voice and strength are gone, and very little impression will you make on that big world that lies outside your own home, your father's house, outside your native village, your own city, or your native land. Though I say this, be not, let me repeat it, discouraged. Do not think this burning hatred of wrong; this noble love of justice were given to you in vain. There is one thing you can do — and this is the lesson I would impress upon you, — begin to make things better in your own heart, in your own home. Begin not with impracticable dreams of making the big world better, but begin to make better that little spot of it, where God has placed you to do His work and fight His battles. Begin to put your vigor and your enthusiasm into the doing of the little homely duties that meet you every day. Be a better son to your parents; a better brother to your sisters; a better neighbor to your fellow-man; more forbearing towards others; kinder and more charitable to the poor; more loyal and devoted to the service of others. And when you have exhausted the possibilities of perfection in these things, then, but scarcely till then, should you seek to make this large, wicked world better."

The first step, therefore, towards reforming others is the reforming of ourselves. That is

the lesson that the hidden life of Christ teaches us. We need it to-day and shall need it every day as long as the world lasts.

A MOTHER'S LOVE.

“And He gave him to his mother.” *Luke vii. 15.*

ON the southern border of Galilee and on the high road to Jerusalem stands the little town of Naim. It lies on the slope of the rugged and barren range of Mt. Hermon. Its gate, opening toward the northeast, looks down a steep descent toward the larger town of Tiberias. Just outside the walls is the cemetery. As it is to-day, so it was nearly two thousand years ago, when the event happened which has made it forever famous. A little funeral procession issued from the gate of the town toward the burial place. First there came the weeping women, and among them one older and sadder than the rest, whose veiled head was bowed in the extremity of grief. She staggered along, supported by those around her, her face wet with tears.

Upon the bier, carried by a confraternity of men called the “servants of the synagogue,” lay the body of a young man in the early prime of manhood; so strong, so young, so beautiful was he that it made the heart ache to see him lying

there cold and motionless. Now, as the procession left the gates of the town there met it a little band of footsore, weary men, with One in their company who seemed their Guide and Master. His tender, compassionate gaze rested on the sad scene, on the weeping mother going to the burial of her only son — and she a widow. Did some thought come into His heart of another mother, another widow, who was to stand by the cross of her only Son, and weep over His tomb? We know not, but we do know that His heart was touched with compassion for the desolate mother. We know the story: How He stayed her tears by one word of calm, tender authority; how He touched the bier; and, as its bearers stood still in awestruck wonder, with another word raised the young man to life. “And he that was dead sat up and began to speak, and He gave him to his mother.”

Why did the Saviour work this miracle? “He was moved with mercy for her,” answers St. Luke. It was for the poor mother’s sake, then. He cannot bear to see a mother’s tears. He must comfort her. He is the Son of a mother, and He will cost her many tears; but those tears, though they wound Him to the quick, He cannot assuage, for they are shed for our sakes. But He shows us in this revelation, which is like a lightning flash revealing the depths of His

sacred heart, the power that mothers have over His sacred heart. In a word, He can refuse a mother nothing. He may put her off for a while, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" Or "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs." But in the end He yields, as He always meant to yield. "Be it done unto thee even as thou wilt."

Now the miracle of Naim is no isolated instance of His tender Mercy; it is only a striking manifestation of a series of graces and miracles that is ever going on around us. Let us think for a moment of this privilege of motherhood, of this singular power that mothers have over the Heart of Jesus. We will take two examples — the mother of St. Louis of France and the mother of St. Augustine of Hippo. We know something of the heroic life of St. Louis, king of France. He was the flower of Christian chivalry, the pattern of Christian kinghood, the brightest glory of one of the brightest ages of the Church. We find here a king who was humble; who loved to serve the sick, the lepers and tend their wounds; a king who cared for the poor more than he did for the rich; a king who hated flattery and kept his body pure and his heart clean; a king who gave his life for Christ, trying to win back His sepulcher from the infidels. There have not been many such

kings as Louis IX. of France. His was a beautiful life,—a life such as one seldom reads of, even among the saints. Now, what was the secret of this singular sanctity in a king? It was a mother's influence. His mother, Queen Blanche of Castile, used to say to him when a child: "My son, I love thee with all the tenderness of which a mother is capable, but I would rather see you dead at my feet than that you should ever grievously offend Almighty God." This saying was engraven on his heart. That is one example of a mother's power and a mother's prayers.

And now we turn to another mother and another son. Here is a mother who brings up her boy as carefully as Queen Blanche brought up hers, but in spite of all he goes wrong. For years he lives in disgrace; he even denies the faith, for which his mother would gladly die. His seems a hopeless case. This brilliant young man, puffed up by his learning, and yet, or rather because of his pride, falling an easy victim to all forms of sensual pleasure. A case far more common than that of Louis — in these days when temptation is so strong and faith so weak. We know the story of St. Monica's son, him whom we call St. Augustine; we know how, when he left his mother's side, he fell rapidly till purity, honor, obedience, faith, all

had perished; he was worse than dead. And we know too, how through all the long, weary years, his mother wept over him; how she clung to him and followed him over the seas; how in Rome and in Milan she never ceased to exhort him, to pray for him, to weep over him; how she was comforted by St. Ambrose; and how at last the loving Saviour was moved with compassion for her, and said to her, "Weep not," and One came and touched the bier and said to him that was dead: "Young man, I say unto thee arise; and he that was dead sat up and began to speak, and He gave him to his mother."

He gave him to his mother. She had lost him, but through no fault of hers, and she received him back; and there "came a great fear on all, and they glorified God." Yes; they glorified God, who had given such power to a mother's prayers and tears. It was only the other day I was reading the pathetic story of a boy from a neighboring town who was brought home after years of wandering by the remembrance of a loving mother. When the wayward youth returned he found that the fond parent had been laid to rest forever. Grief over the continued absence of her child, whom she believed to be dead, hurried her into an untimely grave. The youth on his return told his father how the thought of home and of his mother was

a continual torment to him ; how he often desired to come back, if he only knew that his mother would forgive him. He said he always knew that his mother must have been worried greatly about him, and it was only when the father had assured him that he would be forgiven and had written of his mother's love that the wayward boy made up his mind to return. His remorse was bitter when he learned of his mother's death ; he shed many tears and uttered many regrets that he had not returned to his home to receive the blessing of his mother, as well as her forgiveness, before she passed away.

And now, what is the lesson of these stories, so touching and beautiful ? Just this : That a mother is almost omnipotent, all-powerful, with God. It is true that she cannot always keep her son a St. Louis, but even if for a time he fall away she can win him back to God by her prayers and her tears, as Monica did Augustine. The only thing that God requires of her is that she should be a true Christian mother. There is nothing more beautiful or more sacred on earth than a mother's love. To her the most heroic sacrifices seem easy when they are made to save her child from harm. But a Christian mother's love is supernatural ; she looks beyond this world to the eternal shores ; she seeks her child's everlasting happiness — yes, if need be,

at the expense of her life. And she is always rewarded. For a good mother's early lessons are never lost.

OUR WEAKER BRETHERN.

“Am I my brother’s keeper?” *Gen. iv. 9.*

Do we not still hear from quarters wholly unexpected and despite the humanizing influences of Christianity the same answer too often to-day? When the first murderer was arraigned by the Creator and asked: Where is thy brother? he made answer, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” It was a wrong answer then and did not satisfy him who gave it. It is a wrong answer now and does not excuse him who makes it. Yet this specious irony has been the resource of all those who would evade responsibility for their conduct toward their fellow-man, from Cain’s day down to our own. It is the only refuge of those who do evil to others; of the man who scandalizes his brother; of the man who takes advantage of his weaker neighbor; of the financier who quotes the sanction of “business customs” to justify his Shylock doings; of the promotor or trust-maker who talks of “economic laws” as a plea for the ruin which his profit schemes have brought upon others; of the miser who closes his ear to his

brother's cry for bread; of the employer who in his greed for gain, neglects proper precautions and sacrifices precious human lives; of all that class who find the attainment of their desires running counter to the rights of others. Indeed so far has the spirit of the answer gained ground in the social, economical, and political world that many pernicious organizations gain hearers and followers daily, by mingling with their noxious principles the doctrine of the brotherhood of man, and setting forth the golden rule of charity as their profession of faith. Thus they make charity cover a multitude of sins in a sense wholly undreamed of by the Apostle.

It is true to say man's first duty is to himself; to work out his own individual happiness. But this does not absolve him from the obligation of caring for the welfare and happiness of his brother. The race is one family. We have a common fatherhood in God, and a common brotherhood in Christ. Not one of us can separate our own interests from those of our brethern. We cannot promote the glory of the Heavenly Father without doing what we can for the good of all His children; we cannot work out our own salvation without laboring to do something for the salvation of others. None of us, as the Apostle says, liveth to himself, and

no one dieth to himself. This idea of brotherhood always needs to be emphasized. The temporal and spiritual needs of our brethern claim our care and attention. Even in our primary ideas of justice we are too apt to give little thought to the rights of others. We are too much given to leaving our brother look out for himself. If he falls by the wayside we pass him by; and if he is crushed by the madding crowd in the race for wealth, we think it is none of our business: "Am I his keeper?" Riches acquired by methods which deprive this man of his livelihood and that man of his home, and force others to labor without fair compensation, — wealth so accumulated cannot be said to be acquired justly.

Again; we are concerned in the social betterment of our kind. Mankind's difficulties, the social problems of the day, civic improvement; better education, better laws, purer morals for the community; the just solution of our industrial problems; greater opportunities for the advancement of the poor in temporal, mental and spiritual progress,—all these are our concern. We have no right to fold our hands and seek to justify ourselves with the false plea of Cain. Mankind is our business, and we are bound to attend to it each of us in his place and station in life.

Now it is one of the most hopeful signs of the better time coming that human sympathy is growing in our day to be a more intelligent thing and more widely diffused. We are learning to go back more and more, notwithstanding complexities and difficulties the like of which the world has never seen, to the methods of the early Christian days; — nay, to the methods, we say it reverently, of our Lord and Master Himself. How did Christ speak to human sorrow and human poverty, human weakness and despair? Not in the mere grandeur of kingship, King though He was, as from a throne of purple and gold; not roughly, like the policeman who bids misery clear the way; not patronizingly, like the hard sort of good people who have perhaps never been tempted in some directions themselves, and who, to quote the words of a great preacher, “drop down loving texts into the sinner’s sore with such acidulated accents of severe virtue that the wound smarts and throbs afresh; not sentimentally, like — well, like the feeble folk who write sad stories for little children which harden the hearts they are intended to touch.” Not thus did He act, but by coming into personal touch with the distorted leper, or the proud Pharisee, or the despised publican; by holding out, not a mere gift, but a

loving human hand, to the prodigal, and the sin-stained, and the broken-hearted.

It is when our faith in God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is quietly expressed in daily action that it can and does bear fruit in and tell upon the faith and life of other men.

Surely in this practical age no one will pretend that he is doing his duty as a Christian to his neighbor by speaking fine phrases about the brotherhood of man, or by wishing his neighbor all the success and happiness within his reach, while doing nothing to help him. None of us liveth to himself and no man dieth to himself. Let us then help our weaker brother. Let us be Christians not in words only but in deeds. Thus shall we be like to Him who said: "As you have done it to one of these My least brethern, you have done it to Me."

THE DOUBLE STANDARD.

“Unless your justice exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” *St. Matt. v. 20.*

How aptly these words of the great Teacher apply to many of the men and women of our day! The Pharisees like the poor we have always with us. And they are doing a world of harm to religion, to morality, to social life. It would be hard to find a time in our history when there were such glaring scandals as at the present moment. Every day reveals the most shameless frauds in business, the grossest corruption in politics, great scandals in domestic life, bank-wrecking, and the wanton betrayal of trust by men who hitherto stood high in public esteem and occupied the “first places in the synagogue.” The spirit of “graft” seems to have permeated our political and commercial life. The astounding revelations of business and financial frauds have almost created a feeling of despair in the nation. Here we have men rolling in wealth while the great majority of those whose interests they were pledged to preserve remain comparatively poor.

One of our most prominent preachers tells us that: we are living in a world of deceit and hypocrisy; that what passes as current honesty is not quite honest; what passes as current purity is not quite pure. Virtue as we see it is only an attempt to be virtuous; that it is satisfied even if it does not succeed in being perfectly virtuous. The wicked people downtown gamble coarsely. The good people living in our fashionable avenues gamble refinedly; and then nobody knows exactly what gambling is; whether it is a vice or a virtue. Wicked people, very wicked people, practice licentiousness in the Tenderloin; while others, men and women who wouldn't be seen in the Tenderloin, summon the divorce courts and other appliances to their relief, operate what is in God's sight a Tenderloin of their own, without forfeiting thereby the friendship and confidence of "our best society." Can it possibly be true? And if true, where is the remedy and how can it be applied?

Doubtless there were in the ranks of the Pharisees of old many hypocrites who used the forms of religion and of morality as a cloak for their vices and sins, but there is no reason to believe that the proportion of such men was any greater than has always existed where justice and righteousness have been sufficiently

valued to make it worth while to put the counterfeit into circulation. But we are forced to confess that the motives of the ancient Pharisee seemed quite respectable beside those of his modern follower. It was largely pride of caste that influenced the former in his ugly doings; it is the base, sordid greed of money that is the controlling motive of our present-day Pharisee. Among men high in the church and in the social and financial world the love of money is fast overcoming the restraints of conscience. They act as if they believed that the word *Not* was stricken out of the Commandment: "Thou shalt not steal" for their special benefit. Love of money begins as an instinct, grows into a passion, and ends in a craze. "It seems to be a disease, as certainly as smallpox; a contagious disease, and it is unfortunate, therefore, in the interests of the general health, that there is not some quick and ready means of transferring the infected to that species of pest-house provided for such type of sufferer, not so much for the sake of the infected as in the interests of those not yet contaminated. Assume it is not necessary to consider that the general conscience of the country is debauched. There is no reason for pessimism. It has been abundantly proved on other occasions that moral indignation has not become a lost art among us."

Now wrong-doing in high places is in itself no worse than that found in other places lower down; nor is righteousness that is high up in the social and commercial scale more inherently admirable than that found in narrower spheres or humbler walks of life; yet we know that whatever gives publicity to either the one or the other, be that publicity due to church, social or financial considerations, by so much is its influence for good or evil widened and intensified. And it is just this that makes our great scandals in financial and social life all the worse.

The root of the mischief is that we have allowed our modern Pharisees to set up a double standard of morality. They govern themselves by one code of morals in private life and by quite a different, oftentimes a contrary code, in public. All of us know men in business or politics who as individuals, as fathers, as neighbors, as friends are just, clean, and of good report; yet in their public capacity as politicians, as directors, as members of a corporate body sink themselves and their integrity in the corporation. They will countenance and do things as members of a board that in their individual capacity they would never think of doing. The writer knows of a good church member who being criticised for some act he had done that was plainly inconsistent with his professed

Christian character as a religious man; he justified himself by saying, — and the saying is too commonly acted upon, — “I am always careful not to let my religion interfere with my business”; just as the scheming politician will proclaim that “religion and politics do not mix.” If our directors of trusts and corporations were as unwilling to see their corporations steal as they doubtless are to steal themselves we would be spared the scandalous doings that are too often brought to light.

Let me say a word about the remedy for this virulent disease that has entered seemingly into the very life of the nation. The evil of “graft,” as it is called, is of that sort that does not yield to superficial treatment. The cure must be radical. It is not to be found as some think in legislation, nor in pains and penalties, but in exorcising the spirit of hypocrisy and in diffusing the principles of common honesty among the masses of the people. We may put public officials and insurance directors in jail, but the evils we complain of will go on until the rising generation is taught to regulate life and conduct by the simple principles of common honesty. It is useless to look elsewhere for a remedy. We must set before our youth other ideals than that success in life consists in money-getting and pleasure-seeking. We must drive

out the spirit of the Pharisee and cultivate that of the sincere Christian.

There are just two ways of living; the way of the Pharisee and the way of the Christian. If we choose the way of the Pharisee we may sooner attain to what the world calls success, but in the very process of reaching this success we are constantly growing narrower, meaner, and more dishonest. We are fast losing, what is more precious than success, our own self-respect. If we choose the life of the Christian, the way may sometimes be hard; we may be distanced in the race; there will likely be some disappointments and defeats; wealth may not come as fast as it comes to others; but through defeats and disappointments and lack of success we will be all the time growing into something greater and better than we were before. And that is the Christian's reward. Is it not worth having? There was a man among the Apostles who more than all others had tested the possibilities of both these ways of living. He it is who speaks most emphatically concerning the wrongness of the one and the rightness of the other. Paul of Tarsus was born and bred a Pharisee, under conditions which gave him every advantage for working out life's problem on that basis if the thing was possible. In his own person he combined the best that three civilizations

could give:—the morals of the Jews, the philosophy of the Greeks, the law of the Romans. But in the midst of his career as a Pharisee he was suddenly brought to see the meaning of Christ's life and doctrine. He saw that a man could not render his account to God by reckoning up his good deeds as so many credits to himself. He saw that he must forget himself and think more for others; that he must practice honesty and fair-dealing in everything.

When our modern Pharisees have reached that conclusion, putting aside self and greed for money, we shall doubtless hear less of great scandals in our political and commercial life. For then their justice shall be such as to entitle them to the esteem of men and the favor of the Almighty.

SAYING AND DOING.

“Being mindful of the work of your faith, and labor, and charity.” *1 Thess. 1-2.*

ONE of the keenest reproaches that can be leveled at any man is the accusation of a want of correspondence between his words and deeds, his professions and acts. Every one who has regard for his good name, and who values the esteem of his fellow-men, will be very careful, in all matters subject to the notice of others not to let the difference between what he says and what he does become too obvious. It is quite true that men can be induced sometimes for the sake of gain, or political power, or from some other strong motive, to sacrifice the good opinion of their neighbors by making promises which they never mean to keep, and by professing principles which they do not intend to put in practice. This fact shows only that human nature can fall below what is considered, even apart from religious considerations and the demands of the divine law, as respectable and allowable. Men who descend to this depth show that they place selfish interests above honor and good

name, and sooner or later they suffer the inevitable penalty in the loss of credit and the esteem of their brethren. Most men, we may hope, would not descend so low, and herein it is to be feared that the "children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." For how many of us, Christians, can look into our own lives and say with truth that there is no contradiction between our Christian profession and our daily practice? It may be, indeed, that, following the example of the man of the world, we make a fairly presentable appearance of outward piety and religious observance. But what of the inner life? What of our thoughts, our desires, the motives of our actions? These things may escape the notice of men; they cannot evade the eye of God; by these, and not alone by our outward actions, shall we be judged. "If thy eye be single thy whole body shall be lightsome; but if thy eye be evil, thy whole body shall be darksome." It is purity of motive or intention that counts with the Almighty. Take heed then that you do not your justice before men that you may be seen by them: otherwise you shall not have a reward from your Father in heaven.

St. Paul gives us a very pleasing picture of the Christians of his day who lived up to their faith. They were his joy and his crown, as he

was their great Master and teacher. He thanks God from his heart that the good seed which he sowed had brought forth such rich and abundant fruit. Let us look, for a moment, at this picture that we may compare our own lives with it, and learn what we ought to be to possess the character of the true Christian. There are two elements in St. Paul's description of these good and faithful Thessalonians: an inward element and an outward element. The inward element consists of the three chief Christian virtues, the three theological virtues, as we term them, of faith, hope and charity. The outward element, which is but the result of those three virtues energizing in their hearts, is work and labor. "Mindful," says the apostle, "of the work of your faith, and labor, and charity, and of the enduring of the hope of Our Lord Jesus Christ." In several versions of the New Testament this passage runs a little differently, but the difference, without changing the general sense, brings out more clearly the lesson taught us. "Mindful," we read, "of the work of your faith, and of the hope of Our Lord Jesus Christ." The point to which attention is drawn, is this: that the Thessalonians are praised because they have so well preserved and so well used the divine gifts infused into their souls by the Holy Spirit; that their good

works have made them, as St. Paul declares, "a pattern to all that believe, in Macedonia and Achaia." In other words, having professed the faith, they lived up to their profession; having received the hope of eternal life, of a future destiny higher than anything the world can offer, they kept that hope constantly before them, and having had lighted up in their hearts the divine fire of charity, they kept it bright and glowing by constant exercise. So the Apostle is able to say of them that his gospel has not been unto them "in word only, but in power also, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much fulness." They fulfilled the precept of the Lord, "So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

What a contrast there is, between this picture of a perfect Christian and the lives of too many professing Christians of our day! Even if we succeed, to a greater or less extent, in keeping up the outward appearances of religion, and in so escaping the adverse criticism of our neighbors, how far are we from exhibiting that energetic practice of the true Christian life which would make us "a pattern to all them that believe"; and how great a discrepancy there is, in God's eyes, between what we profess and what we do! Where is the work of our faith, where

the labor of our charity? Where are those visible signs that we have but one hope, the hope of life eternal; that we have a vivid faith, a true grasp of supernatural things; a burning love of God and of our brethren for God's sake? If we have cause to reproach ourselves in this matter, we must seek a remedy without delay, and, as the apostle gives us the picture of a true Christian, so, too, he gives us the true principles and practice of the Christian life in which alone we can find the remedy for what is wrong in ourselves. To become better Christians, living witnesses by our lives of the power of Christian faith we must go back to the first principles of the Christian life, the life of Jesus Christ reproduced in His followers. Now the principles of the Christian life are those three virtues of faith, hope and charity for which St. Paul praises the Thessalonians. We are bound to worship God by faith, hope and charity. Here is the whole duty of the sincere Christian.

These are the precious gifts of the Holy Spirit. They were implanted, together with divine grace, in our souls. Having received them, we are responsible to God for their preservation and active exercise. Woe to us if we wrap up these talents in a napkin! Let us look, then, into our lives and see how we have

been using these precious gifts; gifts which raise us above our natural condition; gifts which have the power to lift us above the sordid things of this world and to place us right before the very throne of God. We should reflect oftentimes on these three great virtues; upon the duties they impose upon us; upon the objects upon which they are to be exercised. In other words we should think much about the good works which ought to result from a living faith, an enduring hope, and an ardent charity; we should compare our lives as they are in this respect with what they ought to be. If all professing Christians were to do this, what a reformation we would witness everywhere! We would become "a pattern" not only "to all that believe," but to those who do not, to the sceptic and scoffer of religion. Even these would be forced to say—"what beautiful lives these Christian people around us are leading: the works of their faith and the labors of their charity, and their enduring hope have gone forth and are known to all!" This would prove an unanswerable argument to unbelievers in favor of the truth and the religion which we profess. There is not one of us but can present it.

A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD.

“And you shall give testimony of Me.” *St. John xv.*
27.

THAT is the mission of every sincere Christian — to give testimony for his Lord and Master. All of us are familiar with the expression. Daily we hear of men taking the witness-stand to give testimony favorable to the character of some person on trial. And we know that this favorable testimony has great weight with both judge and jury. It very often inclines the scale of justice in favor of the accused. So is it with the professing Christian. He is called upon, not once or twice but every day and every hour of his life, to bear evidence in favor of the religion he professes. It is his duty to-day especially to give testimony of Christ before a sceptical and unbelieving world. Because too many of us fail to do this in practical life, religion suffers and men begin to doubt its efficacy. There is no greater hindrance to the progress of religious truth than the ugly sight of so many men and women of our day, professing to be Christians and living

the lives of heathens. The subject, then, of bearing testimony for Christ is one of great importance. Let us consider it in some of its aspects.

One might ask what need has God of our testimony? why should the creature be called upon to act the part of witness for the Creator? Certainly the Blessed Saviour needed not the testimony of men, but in His infinite wisdom and goodness He has seen fit to entrust to each one of his followers this sublime mission of giving testimony of Him before the world; and this for the sake of our fellowmen. "You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, that you may declare the virtues of Him who hath called you out of darkness." This, then is the mission of every believer,—to be a witness for the Master.

How are we fulfilling this duty? We all know with what a keen sense of criticism the world examines in matters of importance the testimony of those witnessing in behalf of others, and how it values their testimony in proportion to their standing and integrity. Well, so is it with regard to Christians and the testimony they are called upon to give. We are all on the witness-stand of the world. To-day the unbelieving part of it is passing judgment upon our testimony, deciding whether it be for or

against the Master whom we serve. Now, coming down to details, bearing witness to Christ, is to declare by our lives that He is what He claims to be: God the Son, in the form or vesture of man; that He is the true Messiah; the Saviour, who came "to sit on the throne of David, his father," and of whose kingdom, "there will be no end"; that the message we call the Gospel is His word; that the means of applying that message to the sanctification and salvation of our souls are His work. The various creeds and professions of faith that with varying minuteness unfold, explain and apply the "truth as it is in Christ" are but so many ways of verbally "giving testimony to him."

Let us take an instance: we are familiar with the splendid testimony St. Peter gave under the most trying circumstances in favor of his Master. One day Christ solemnly appealed to him: "Whom do men say that I am?" It was hard, nay well-nigh impossible, to flesh and blood, to stand up among the doubting crowd and publicly testify that the simple carpenter of Galilee was God Incarnate. The inspiration came not from earth but from heaven: "Thou art Christ, the son of the living God." And the Apostle's reward came immediately in words of loving assurance: "Blessed art thou, Simon, Bar-Jona;—flesh and blood hath not

revealed it to thee; but my Father who is in heaven." This testimony of St. Peter rings out clear through the ages. The greatest Christian temple ever raised to the worship of God, the largest and fairest the world has ever seen, is St. Peter's at Rome. To-day and for centuries the most sacred and oft-visited spot in that great church is the "Confession" dedicated to this testimony of St. Peter; the declaration by a poor fisherman of Galilee that "Christ was the son of the living God." Nor was St. Peter alone in bearing testimony for the Master; the other apostles and disciples with courage and constancy even unto death "gave similar testimony of Him."

If to-day it is hard for some in face of a sceptical and indifferent world to bear witness to Christ, even though time and trial have proven the divinity of His religion, what must it not have been for the first disciples? All the world, with all the power at its command, was then hostile to Christ and His teaching. Outside of a small corner of the earth God was almost unknown, and inside Judea but few, indeed, looked upon Christ as "sent by God." Superstition and idolatry held fast the pagan world; mere human wisdom was deemed the sole fount of truth and righteousness. Pride, passion, and slavery ruled supreme. The whole social fabric

seemed to be based upon them. Law and ethics deemed them impregnable. In such a state of society bearing testimony for Christ and His Gospel meant something; yes, it was often made at the sacrifice of life itself. For three hundred years the profession of Christianity was the stepping-stone to martyrdom. Yet how few hesitated! To a gross, selfish, and material world these early Christians preached a pure, lofty, ideal religion, that ran counter to every received opinion. They bade the wise and proud to adore and imitate a crucified Jew and look up to a Galilean peasant as "the Way, the Truth, and the Life." Imperial Rome and cultured Greece were called upon by a band of uncouth fishermen to bend mind and heart to a new form of worship that ran counter to all the beliefs and prejudices of the day. Had these first Christians been men of wealth, power, great talents or learning, their success in bearing testimony to Christ might have been explained thereby. But no! Every human element was wanting. "God chose the weak things of this world to confound the strong." Nor were they as "reeds shaken by the wind." They were firm and steadfast to the end, almost all of them finally sealing their testimony to Christ by a martyr's death.

Now, how is it with the Christians of our

day? Do we find them standing as steadfastly for the truth? Conditions may be somewhat changed. No one in this country is called upon to die for the faith. We have passed the days of religious persecution, for ever, let us hope. But the duty rests nevertheless upon every Christian to-day of giving testimony for the truth. The same errors and vices, the same ugly and sinful practices that were found by St. Paul in Greece and Rome, are still to be found in our modern world. The wheat and tares grow together now as then. The men and women of our day are too often living for wealth and sensual pleasures as they lived in the old pagan days. Materialism largely rules the spirit of the age. Unbelief veiled under the veneer of religion is rampant in society. The destructive criticism of the day is shattering the Bible; the great basis of truth, of reason and the moral law is being set aside in human affairs. There is hardly a sound social or ethical principle from the wrongness of suicide to the evils of "graft" that is not called in question. We have moralists to-day, in and out of the pulpit, who are trying to bear testimony to Christ and the Devil at the same time.

Such is the condition that confronts the sincere believer of our day who recognizes this duty of bearing testimony for Christ. Never,

surely, was there greater need to discharge fully this duty. We have a host of sceptics and unbelievers, because the Christians of our day are not what they profess to be. Action is more telling than speech. Deeds speak louder than creeds. A life modelled on that of the Master whom we serve is always the best evidence we can give by way of testimony to Him. "He that is not with Me is against Me." We must, therefore, choose; we are either for or against Christ. Which is it?

THE KEY TO HEAVEN.

“Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of My Father who is in heaven.” *St. Matthew vii. 21.*

THAT is the supreme test — doing the will of the Heavenly Father. There is no other way that opens into the Kingdom of God. People have tried to enter by other means and failed. A man cannot live a life which he knows to be wrong and make his peace with God by regular attendance at church, by generous gifts for religious purposes, even by calling on the Lord in prayer. These things good in themselves find no favor unless he is first of all right with God; that is, does the will of the Father. Yet we have a great many people in our day trying to get around this difficulty. Here, for instance, is a man who has made his money in an improper way who is seeking for admission into the Kingdom of God by building churches and endowing universities and by generous gifts to charities and public uses. Such a man may succeed in getting the best pew in the most fashionable church of the city; he may be-

come the warm friend of godly pastors; he may figure as a director of charitable institutions; he may be a public-spirited citizen, sitting on many platforms and denouncing vice; he may even be a leader at prayer-meetings; but never in any such way can he enter into the Kingdom of God. Before he can do that he must be done with injustice; he must make restitution for his wrong-doing and thus set himself right with the Heavenly Father.

God does not condone fraud, and the frauds which the imperfect laws of man cannot touch are tried in the court of God exactly as though they were midnight burglary or highway robbery. The man who has amassed his millions by railroad wrecking and stock watering; by controlling councils and legislatures; by ingenious deals through which the money in equity belonging to others has by no process punishable by human law passed into his possession, is tried and convicted in the court of God on the vulgar charge of theft.

There is no use at the bar of divine justice in giving enormous retainers for the best counsel to defend him on his last trial. The most pious priests and eloquent preachers cannot save him from the clutches of the law of God; no, nor can they get a stay of proceedings nor win a single moment of delay. Neither can he bribe

the jurors, and the sheriff that receives him will not allow him to escape on any pretext, nor for any sum. His place is with the wicked, the doers of evil things, those who have defied God's law. With them is his portion in the hereafter. God knows no difference between them. He classes them altogether,—enemies of society, enemies of the state, enemies of righteousness, enemies of God. He has the same condemnation for the man who robs you of your purse and the man who contrives to relieve the public of millions of dollars. They are in His sight equally loathsome, equally vulgar, equally criminal. And no character that priests or pastors can give the big thief is going to make him any less hideous in God's sight than the common burglar; no retainer which he may give to plead his cause in the shape of churches and charities is going to help him to get free from the awful condemnation of his judge. Every one who reads our Lord's words must see that he is speaking of just such persons when He said:—"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father, who is in Heaven." Those churches, hospitals, asylums, universities, libraries, missions and the like are oftentimes but the cry of "Lord, Lord," and when they utter that cry in

that particular manner there are plenty of really good men who will tumble over one another in the attempt to take them by the hand and smile lovingly upon them and raise their eyes heavenward and say:—"Oh! my dear sir, you are doing a noble work for the Lord! The Lord has indeed blessed the whole community in giving you this vast wealth. You are preaching the Lord's name like a prophet; you are casting out legions of devils and working miracles by your benevolence." By and by this man comes to the gates of heaven. He seems very sure of admittance. He says:—"Here are my testimonials from the Lord's representatives. They show how I have prophesied, cast out devils and worked miracles." But the Lord says to him:—"I never knew you! depart from me you worker of iniquity."

It is passing strange how men will blind themselves to the very nature of God and to the character of His dealings with men. It is astonishing how easily we misread the most obvious teaching of Christ and practice self-deception. And stranger still that it should be so through all the ages of the world's history, and doubtless it will continue to the end. People keep thinking of God as a being who can be propitiated and influenced much after the fashion that a heathen appeases his idol. They

forget His very nature; that God is love, truth and justice; that the law of virtue and integrity is His will; and that unless a man set his heart to do that will he cannot know God and possess eternal life. Neither is the law of God in any way an arbitrary or an accidental thing, so that some other condition of our eternal happiness could be given to man than the acceptance for the aim and rule of our lives of this divine law. It is essential because it is the fundamental law of the being of God and of all that is divine, and our eternal happiness lies in our becoming like God, developing the divine within us; being united with Him and filled by His Holy Spirit. That, and that only, is heaven and eternal life.

But someone may say: — “Is it not a noble and good use of wealth to build hospitals, churches, colleges and asylums? Supposing a man to have gotten his wealth in a doubtful or wrong way, what better amends can he make than to use it in such a manner? And can he not even do more good by this means than he has done harm in acquiring it? And do you not believe that a man who does such a good work as that will be accepted of God and forgiven?” This is the answer: Supposing that a man has picked another man’s pocket of five dollars. If he came to you and gave you five

cents of that toward building churches, and ten cents toward sending out missionaries, and five cents more toward educating men for the ministry, and ten cents toward erecting a hospital, would you shake him by the hand and assure him that he was doing more good than he had ever done harm; and that he was a noble Christian, who could not miss getting to heaven? You certainly would say that the very first condition of repentance must be restitution; and that he must be thoroughly sorry for what he has done, must turn about, lead a new life and give up stealing altogether.

Now the conditions are the same whether a man has taken much or little; whether he has taken it in a way punishable by human law or in an unjust manner which yet is not punishable by human law. The first condition of repentance is restitution, and no man can draw near to God until he repents of his sin. A good many excellent people may think differently, and be disposed to deal more leniently with our modern Dives. But there stand the words of the great teacher and they seem to close the gates of hope to all except those who do "the will of my Father who is in heaven." Dives must mend his ways, if he wants to enter the kingdom of God. That much is quite certain and very clear.

FAITH AND DOUBT.

"Jesus saith to him: because thou hast seen me, Thomas, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen and have believed. *St. John xx. 29.*

WHY is it that there are to-day and all days so many religious sceptics? How does it come that one person believes while another does not? If, it has been urged, the argument in its favor is so plain and pressing, why do not all men believe in the religion of Jesus Christ? These are questions that demand an answer. What is the answer?

It is well to make it clear at the start that faith is a supernatural gift, the fruit of divine grace. It is not the result of a logical process, since one may be convinced of the truth of religion and yet have no faith. There is a state of mind which leads to faith, and each one has a part to play in the process that precedes faith. The text furnishes an instance of a typical sceptic. How does our Divine Lord deal with the case? Let us note the points. The sceptic is one of the apostles; one, we would suppose, likely to believe without much difficulty. But what happens when St. Thomas is told that his

Master has risen from the grave? As strongly as he could put it he declares that "unless I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my hand in His side I will not believe." Now, what is wrong in this? The others had seen and touched our Lord, and appear not to have believed until they did. We shall see what was wrong. Again, let us note the words of our Lord when He allowed Thomas to have the evidence he desired. The words are those cited in the text. And here one might ask, why is it "blessed to believe in Him" without seeing rather than to have the sight of Him which the other apostles had when they believed?

In giving an answer to this question we shall find an answer to the original question: Why one person believes or has faith, and another, as favorably situated, has not. Let me observe that the doctrine here laid down by Christ was nothing new. He had frequently insisted on this same teaching. "Unless you see signs and wonders you believe not." And, again, "He wrought not many miracles because of their unbelief." In these passages he plainly implies that hardness of belief is a fault. On other occasions He praises easiness of belief. For instance: "O woman, great is thy faith!" "Amen, I say to you, I have not found so great faith in Israel," and similar passages.

Now, this doctrine of Christ cannot mean that faith is against reason; or that reason does not ordinarily precede faith. The meaning of the passages cited is this: That with good dispositions faith is easy, and without good dispositions faith is not easy; and that those who were praised for their faith were such as had already good dispositions; that those who were blamed were such as were wanting in this respect. This is the point to be kept in view,—that we must prepare ourselves for the gift of faith. We must have the dispositions necessary for belief. We must be honest with ourselves and just to our convictions.

The angels' song at the coming of the Prince of Peace declared that the gifts of the new-born Saviour were for "men of good will." By "good will" is meant good disposition. They were those who by their honesty of purpose and fairness of mind would be led to believe "in His name," and "to be born," as St. John says, "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

Now, there is given to every man born into this world the light of conscience; and if he is faithful in following this inward guide he has taken the first step in the way that leads to faith. But this secret teacher does not tell him all he desires to know; and, moreover, it is difficult

to separate what it really says from what passion, pride, self-love or self-will mingles with it. There is need therefore of the conscience being enlightened by truth and the certainty of revelation. The man "of good will" obeying this inward voice is consequently on the lookout for this much-needed light of truth to guide him. This is the attitude of a person who may be said to be naturally religious. On the other hand, consider the state of mind of him who thinks little or nothing of religion; who disobeys his conscience; who would rid himself of it if he could; what is God's truth or revelation to him? He is content with himself; he wants to be let alone; he is busy with worldly affairs; or he is occupied with what he calls his social duties or his pleasures. He hardly realizes that he has even a soul to save; or, if he does, he gives little thought to its salvation. It is plain that he is not a man of "good will" and has nothing of those dispositions that lead to faith.

Now we are prepared to understand how differently a message from the unseen world will affect a person taken from each of these two classes. The one is ready, disposed to receive it; the other is not. The one carefully examines the evidence in favor of divine truth; the other puts it aside or blurs it over. The one goes out to meet the truth; the other thinks the truth

ought to come to him, or force itself upon him.

From what has been said, then, one is able to see why the Saviour praised easiness of belief and condemned hardness of belief. To be easy in believing is to be ready to inquire and accept the evidence of religious truth when presented; to be hard of belief is to be slow and reluctant to inquire and to shut one's mind against the light that is shining in upon it. This, then, is the answer to the question: How is it that one person believes or has faith, and another, as favorably situated, has not?

CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT CHRIST.

“The fool said in his heart, there is no God.” *Psalm*
52.

A LITTLE while ago I fell in with a very intelligent gentleman who happened to be passing his vacation days at the same summer resort as myself. We spent many pleasant hours together; we had frequent rambles into the woods; we looked out with delight on the distant hills and nearer home on the rolling green sward where the golf-players were enjoying their healthy sport. One dreamy afternoon as we sat side by side in a rustic arbor the conversation turned to religion. My friend made some inquiries on the subject and before we had proceeded very far he informed me that he “did not belong to any church; in fact had no fixed form of belief; that he was a sceptic; that he tried to live an honest, decent life; that his creed, if he had any, was limited to the golden rule — do unto others as you would that others do unto you” —

Now this man is the type of a large class of men and women who are to be found in every community and it is worth while to consider

their condition of mind. The spirit of doubt and denial has possessed them; they have rejected all dogmatic teaching, and they substitute some form of "independent morality" for religious belief.

It has been well said that a new heresy is to-day an impossibility. It cannot even be imagined. The world has so completely passed beyond that stage, that it can never recur to it. The great religious controversies of the past, are now regarded by a large and influential body of thinkers as childish, because metaphysical. The sceptical world has cast aside the shreds and patches of doctrinal truth; and now stands forth in all the bareness of its agnosticism, naked and unashamed. In the great centres of intellectual progress in London, Paris, Rome, New York minor polemics are ignored, and the mighty forces on both sides are being sifted and rearranged along the two great lines of Faith and Unfaith; Dogma and No Dogma; Life, as it presents itself to our bare senses, and Life as it is revealed to us with all its vast issues and responsibilities by Him who sitteth above the stars. The newest development, then, of religious doubt is the denial not of one or two particular dogmas or articles of belief, but the denial of all dogma, and the substitution of a system of ethics whose foundations are unstable

and undefined. My summer friend spoke for a multitude. Let us see how they arrive at their conclusions and formulate their views. Because the common sense of mankind declares that in the lowest condition of human society, and still more in its higher and more complex forms, some kind of religion or ethics is necessary to keep the frame of things together, unbelievers have adopted the following formulas which will be at once recognized:

“A religious life is compatible with disbelief in dogmas.” “Religion, but no Churches or Creeds.” “Ethics, but no doctrine.” “Christianity without Christ.” “Christianity — not belief in Christ’s divinity, but living according to Christ’s maxims.”

This is a fair summing up of the most popular form of what is known as “Independent Morality” in our day. And it is the most specious, because it appeals to a moral sense which, even in the worst of times, men have not questioned although they might be uneasy under its restrictions. Only a few are bold enough to doubt its existence and advocate a return to Nature as did Rousseau and Walt Whitman.

It is true that sceptics, like Frederic Harrison, calmly repudiate the doctrines of Christ as incompatible with human progress, and advocate a reversion to Nature, or such an adaptation

of ethics to the laws of Nature as shall meet present social and political necessities. And it may be remembered, too, that Tennyson threw dogma to the winds when he declared :

“There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds;”

And that he ever after floundered hopelessly in his attempt to reconcile the wild savagery of Nature with some occult law that made for righteousness,

“Oh, yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of Ill,”

with some far off, undefined and shadowy Utopia, where all things will be reconciled in unity and harmony —

“The one far off, Divine event,
To which the whole Creation moves.”

But these are theories that left no effect, at least as yet, on the government of the world. It is universally admitted that social safety, political well-being, the preservation of the Commonwealth, the sanctity of the home, the safeguarding of individual rights, demand the acknowledgment, if not the careful cultivation, of the moral sense. Whatever fine theories may be spun in libraries, the world cannot well get on without the Ten Commandments. If the

imperious precepts: "Thou shalt not kill"; "Thou shalt not bear false witness" could be defied with impunity, civilization would soon come to an end, and all social life would perish without the possibility of being reconstructed on any other basis.

The necessity then of some moral code may be taken as generally admitted. But, say our sceptical friends, this moral code must be considered independent of propositions, doctrines or decrees emanating from Churches. Nay, they urge, would it not even tell in favor of morality if the wars of the sects should cease; and if the ears of the world were no longer tormented with disputations about dogmas or controversies; about abstruse and metaphysical questions which the human mind will never solve; and if we were left at peace to pursue the avocations of life within the limits of the moral law, about which there can be no question? But right here is the difficulty. We cannot have a moral code or law without dogmatic teaching. For this "moral sense," innate or acquired, must rest on some principle. If the precept, "Thou shalt not kill," is accepted, the principle from which it originated and on which it depends must be accepted also. Surely it is not a mere whim or caprice of humanity that keeps men's hands from being inbrued in the blood of

their fellow-men. It is not a sentiment of mercy or compassion or mere humanitarianism that protects the world from promiscuous murder. How valueless such sentiments are in a whirlwind of rage and passion, such as is let loose in war, or in a theatre panic, or a sinking ship we know well. There must be some underlying principle, tacitly acknowledged by the entire race, and which is formulated in the theory or statement in which all men acquiesce: "It is wrong and criminal to shed the blood of another." But that is dogma. Therefore, in accepting the common religious and social principle, you put the yoke of dogma around your neck.

The same rule applies to every moral principle by which society is cemented and solidified. The Church says: "Whosoever declares or holds that it is right to steal, or rob, or murder, or bear false witness, let him be anathema." The non-dogmatist says: "Every man possesses a moral sense; and this declares that it is criminal, and subversive of all moral order, to steal, or murder, or bear false witness; and whosoever holds the opposite theory is only fit to be put outside the pale of civilization." Where here is the difference in the formula? The veriest non-dogmatist has "anathema" on his lips as well as the dogmatic church.

Let us take another instance. Our "independent moralists" say to us: we freely admit that the moral teachings of Christianity are very beautiful; and we try to fashion our lives thereon. But we stop there. As to the person of Christ, His origin, His nature, His mission, His miracles, His power, we know nothing. We accept His moral teaching as quite in consonance with our "moral sense." We reject all dogmas connected with His person, His mission, or His miracles. And the Christian asks: does not all the force of the supreme moral teaching of Christ come to the fact that He was a Divine teacher? Why do you not accept the teachings of Confucius, of Seneca, of Marcus Aurelius, of Epictetus? Because they were mere men, liable to error; and because they spoke without authority. What has given weight to the words of Christ, such weight that even to-day, after nineteen hundred years, they are accepted as the supreme embodiment of all ethical teaching? The answer is, His authority. The authority of a mere sage or philosopher? Certainly not. This would bring him down to the level of a Socrates. What then? His authority, as God. There is no denying it. There is no possible suppression of that faith, latent and dormant in some minds, but existent in all minds, that Christ is the Son of the Living

God. The very hatred men bear to Him, their blasphemies against His adorable name, prove this. If He were a mere sage, the world would bow its head and pass Him by. But the world knows He is much more; and hence it rages against him. It cannot separate His teachings from His mission. It cannot separate His mission from His person. It cannot separate His person from His Godhead. Whether it accept His teaching as the supreme moral code for humanity, or rejects with hatred His teaching and His Person alike, it admits unconsciously and unwillingly, by adapting His moral law to its own moral sense, the dogma of the Incarnation. So you see if we would be logical and consistent we cannot get rid of dogmatic teaching or doctrinal belief.

FALSE CLAIMS.

“Every house is built by some man; but He that created all things is God.” *Hebrew iii. 4.*

THERE is to-day a large class who, while conforming outwardly and often unconsciously to the standard of Christian morality, at the same time openly renounce all belief in Christian dogma. This state of things is chiefly due to the teachings of agnostic science. Faith and science are assumed to be in conflict; the conclusions of the one being regarded as contradictory to the teaching of the other. The “Higher Criticism” has destroyed the faith of multitudes. In many of the theological seminaries of the country open disbelief in some parts of the Bible is taught. In fact the sacred book itself is looked upon merely as literature to be analyzed and discussed just as Shakespeare or Chaucer is. There are many ministers in the various denominations who believe that certain parts and books of the Bible need not be accepted. Their position and teaching have hastened the growth of disbelief in all supernatural religion.

Of this I was reminded a few days ago in reading of a young candidate, fresh from one of these great theological seminaries, who presented himself for examination before a board of ministers. He was asked for his views on Adam and the fall of man; he promptly replied that "Adam was a myth"; and this being so there "could not be nor was there any fall of man." The young man, needless to say, was rejected. And now there is strife in that particular denomination because of the setting aside of this hopeful "Christian agnostic." This young man was merely giving the views taught him in the seminary. The professor may be honored, but the pupil is rejected. As a consequence we have one of the foremost ministers of the denomination to which the young man belonged flippantly characterizing the action of the members of the examination board as that "of small men propounding small conundrums to intending candidates for church orders"; "conundrums," he goes on to say, "that would have sunk the whole original twelve Apostles in the Sea of Galilee."

This is how agnostic science is destroying the foundations of divine faith. The prevailing unbelief and religious unrest have been brought about by this destructive criticism of the Bible. Sometime ago a prominent minister said to me:

“ I am afraid to open that book lest it unsettle my belief ”; yet the book was the Holy Scriptures and the speaker was a Christian minister. These cases are cited to indicate the prevalence of unbelief in our day.

Now without discussing the “ higher criticism ” I think it worth while to point out that agnostic science which has disturbed the faith of so many and is responsible for the prevalent doubt, has proved unsatisfactory and disappointing in its conclusions; that there is at the present time a noticeable reaction against its claims and pretensions; and that many of its leaders are showing signals of distress.

Let me deal, first, with the proposition that there is to-day a reaction from agnostic science. Later on I hope to say something on the two other propositions. Note the change. But a little while ago the agnostic scientist, always referred to as “ that eminent man of science,” was regarded as the supreme pontiff of all knowledge worth knowing. In pity for a generation whose “ intelligence was limited and whose mind was warped by “ old superstitions ” that were said to be “ revealed because they could not be proved,” he undertook to explain the universe on a rational and scientific basis. A tone of superiority and self-confidence marked all his pronouncements. His style was magis-

terial. The crowd always like that. It is imposing. "Here are men," they say, "who make you feel they are sure of what they teach; let us listen to them"; and they listened and read.

Up to the beginning of the new century the disciples of agnostic science were many and credulous. The output of the press was large. Books full of the new knowledge went through many editions. Popular science lectures were established in all the great centres. The men of agnostic science occupied not only the professor's chair, but they went *en tour*. Everywhere they had crowded and enthusiastic audiences. Their novel theories and speculations became the fashion of the hour in universities, theological seminaries, in drawing rooms, in workingmen's unions and clubs. Not to be able to talk Darwin and the "Origin of Species" was to be very uninformed, indeed. Not to have at least dipped into the hard and ponderous meditations of Herbert Spencer was to be imperfectly educated. Not to fall into praise of the classic diction of Tyndall; not to be an admirer of the bolder and more downright style of his twin star, Huxley, and not to know at least the drift of their daring, was to be a very old-fashioned person, indeed, "much behind the times." Not to be tinged a little with the scorn

of Thomas Carlyle and enjoy the savage anger of the omniscient judgments "the sage of Chelsea" chartered himself to pass on all mankind, was to be unadvanced. Not to smile over the crude sallies and bitter invective of the late Mr. Ingersoll; not to be tolerant of Mr. Leslie Stephen in his flouting of the Divinity, was to be illiberal. Such was the feeling which to a large extent prevailed in the English-speaking world not so long ago. In fact, from about the middle of the last century to the beginning of this, agnostic science had things much its own way. It occupied almost the whole field of thought. It had the reading multitude at its feet. No patient hearing could be gained for the defenders of the old and orthodox teaching. Many were chary of criticising the new theories, lest they should be set down as opposed to learning and progress. That was a terrible label to attach to one's self. But the day was coming, and it is here now, when a voice of protest was to be raised, not from among the believers, but from the ranks of the friends and sympathizers of agnostic science.

These men of unbelief were to be arraigned and at length asked to show, where was the benefit to their fellow men, from their theories so loudly and confidently proclaimed. They were asked to point out what reliable comfort

they had built up, or were going to build up, to take the place of the old beliefs that had been a protecting shelter to mankind for ages.

The protest against the pretensions of science is not directed, it need scarce be said, against men who confine their scientific labors solely to the material benefit of their fellow men. The days of these men have been given to smooth the rough places of life; to make the human burden more bearable through their ingenious inventions and marvelous discoveries. These men have never cast disturbing doubts into the souls of their fellow men. Such scientists are greatly and deservedly honored. Men like Lord Kelvin, Marconi, Edison, Quatrefages, Virchow, Pasteur, Curie and others are justly regarded as benefactors of their kind. The challenge is offered only to that other class of scientists, biologists and naturalists, who have pushed their work, otherwise useful and lawful, beyond its legitimate limits, and have arrogantly demanded the surrender of all previous beliefs in favor of their scientific theories and conclusions. And the challenge comes, as we shall see, from those who are supposed to be friends and supporters of agnostic science. The reaction has plainly set in, and it is high time for those who are educating young men for the Christian ministry to take note of it. In olden times

Kings "touched for the evil." In our time it was science that was "to touch" for the evils of humanity. But, now, that its magic hand has been for half a century or more stretched forth to heal, it is not yet apparent that the evils of humanity are growing any lighter or less. Science,—agnostic science,—has been "touching" in vain. It has failed to remedy humanity's ills, and it would deprive man of divine faith, hope and charity.

And so it has come to pass that we are justified now in asking the agnostics: "What practical good has come to the world from your labors,—is a mere negative result all we are to get from your great promises as a reward for our patient waiting?"

THE GOSPEL OF WEALTH.

“Sell what you possess and give alms. Make to yourselves bags which grow not old, a treasure in heaven which faileth not.” *St. Luke xii. 33.*

THE preacher of to-day rarely if ever takes this text for his sermon. And there is good reason for his passing it by. He thinks that he cannot use it to advantage. For how could he apply its plain counsels to a modern congregation? It might as well be not there at all in the XII chapter and 33rd verse of the gospel according to St. Luke, with like teaching of the divine Master in the other gospels. He knows that a large part of his congregation is thinking a great deal more of laying up treasures on earth than in heaven; of buying and adding to their present possessions rather than of selling what they have — and giving alms. This the preacher at least suspects; and being a wise and prudent person, he says to himself, “What’s the use of preaching the impossible? No one to-day outside of a monastic institution is ready to do anything like giving away all his or her wealth to the poor; the thing can’t be done; this counsel of the Master is hardly suited to our age

in love with wealth and the things that wealth can procure." Hence if the thought comes to him to preach on the right use of wealth, he will look up some other text of scripture. For he must needs be careful, indeed, not to hurt the feelings of some of the richer members of the flock. Now, it is quite true to say that even the disciples of Christ found much difficulty with the words, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God." Recently a young man "who has great possessions" and is also a teacher of a Bible class in New York City grappled with this difficult saying of Christ. He frankly debated it with the members of his class, and did not spare himself the tacit or explicit inferences in the minds of his hearers, however personal he may have felt them.

He reasoned first that when Jesus bade that other young man who had great possessions go and sell what he had and give to the poor, conditions of society were very different from the conditions of to-day. He held that there were many other things that a man might give up for Christ's sake besides his property, as, for instance, legitimate pleasures, though he did not say why he is bound to do that; he held that it was always a matter between Christ and His follower what should be given up; and he sug-

gested that Christ might have perceived that the heart of that young man was mainly set upon his possessions, and therefore their sacrifice was the sacrifice due from him. He thought that we ought to take Christ's words in a broad sense, yet he applauded the disciples who left their nets and followed Him, though he seemed to feel that their merit was in their obedience rather than in the surrender of their property. When one of his class asked, "How about Tolstoy, who gave up everything in life, all his worldly possessions?" the young man did not take the short and easy way with Tolstoy, and simply say that he was a crank, but answered that his was "certainly a very noble example," though he urged again the difference of present social conditions, and argued that a man could serve God while attending strictly to business and that we must not take Christ's sayings always in a too literal sense.

The interpretation of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., as reported, was indeed pathetic; for he said quite what that other young man of Christ's day might have said to a Bible class in the synagogue, after parting very sorrowfully with Jesus.

No one can read that plain story without a heartache, if he has a heart; it is awfully human; and no one if he has a heart, can with-

hold a throb of compassion for the young man with great possessions who finds himself in a like position to-day; who hears that call and longs to obey, but cannot because of his great possessions. Then, as now, such a young man would have told the members of his class that "the conditions of society" were different from those of a time when a person could give up his property for the sake of life everlasting. He would have made excuses, and said that those fishermen who had left their nets at Christ's call had certainly set a very noble example; "and that the lesson to be derived is obedience to the words of Christ," but you must first make sure whether He meant His words to be taken figuratively or literally. The young man would probably have argued that it would do very well for a lot of poor fishermen, who had very little to lose, to take them literally; but that a person of independent property, realizing all the high responsibilities of wealth, had better think twice before doing so. He might even have shown that obedience in some such instances would have been essentially impossible; that if, for instance, a certain very wealthy man of that day gave every village in Judea a free library, still he would probably not succeed in dying poor.

The conditions of competitive society are now

just what they always were, without scarcely the shadow of change. The world, the flesh, and the devil we have always with us. It is no harder now to do the will of Christ, to fulfil his sayings literally, than it was in Jerusalem two thousand years ago. There were then rich and poor, as there are now; and there was the same buying and selling and getting of gain. The question is whether the literal fulfillment of His sayings was not always possible. A few of His immediate followers thought so, and formed themselves into a little republic, in which they had all things in common. They still left the well-meaning to ask themselves how they could enlarge the eye of the needle so as to enter the kingdom of God with their assets, after having given the deserving poor all they could without pauperizing them.

This whole subject of the right use of riches bristles with difficulties. Most men of wealth who profess to be Christians are, and always have been, trying to do the impossible thing: "to serve God and Mammon" at the same time. It is almost true to say that great wealth degrades in every instance. Only the few, and they the noblest natures, can have great possessions and not be debased by them. Too often the rich live only for their own ease and pleasure. This becomes their business; and then, as

it palls, it degrades and debases them, taking away their capacity for serving and loving others. But the mere possession of a reasonable amount of money, enough to supply the necessities of life, in order that man may have opportunity to think and expand in the direction of the things that are really worth while is a necessity. Money is not a thing accursed, since it is man's first duty to himself to make himself financially independent and it behooves all to make at least a livelihood.

It is not what one has, but what he is, that counts. Jesus declared that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth," for, "the life is more than the meat and the body more than the raiment." What we are is the main thing especially when there is question of entering the kingdom of God. The accidental conditions of poverty or wealth are not to be considered.

And it is well, too, to remember that poverty and narrowness of means have attended oftentimes on many of the best words spoken and the best deeds done in all human history. There is hardly a form of noble consecration that is not self-denying, that does not involve a distinct rejection of wealth as a primary pursuit. The words of the Christian scientist are classical, "I have not time to make money." The

man who has the spirit of invention will sacrifice almost anything to perfect his idea, will consume his own furniture to secure the heat by which to obtain a vitrified surface. The best literature has been written in contempt of money and published in negligence of it. A man who feels that he has a word worth saying will write it, though it bring him no return, either in money or in honor. It is to him "the burden of the Lord." How much more is this true when applied to spiritual things? Considering these things, what Christ said to the young man who had great possessions and whom He loved, but who was not ready to give away his goods for the sake of following Him, it must be perfectly clear that Jesus recognized great wealth as a danger, just as a great attachment to anything else may be a danger to one's eternal salvation. And that can be preached from any Christian pulpit to-day without running the slightest risk of "hurting anybody's feelings." It would be well if it were heard more frequently than it is in our Churches, for it sums up the true gospel of wealth.

THE GOSPEL OF PAIN.

“Let me either suffer or die.” *Saying of St. Teresa.*

THAT was the saying of one of God's saints. How very strange it sounds to our modern ears! It is in plain contradiction to the common view of the value of life. With most of us it is generally assumed, as a first and self-evident principle, that suffering is the one unmitigated evil, and that to escape it ourselves, or to lessen it for others, is the only reasonable and worthy end we can put before us. Here he who lives for himself, the egotist, and he who lives for others, the altruist, are as one in their estimate of good and evil. The former, indeed, by cutting the ties which would bind him by affection to his fellowmen and make him a sharer of their sufferings narrows the area in which sorrow can lodge the arrows she directs against him; the latter going out of himself by sympathy, makes, together with the many with whom he is bound up, an easy mark for her most casual dart. Yet what they both fly from and what they fight against is one and the same thing — pain, suffering, sorrow. There are few

so short-sighted as not to see that, however undesirable pain may be in itself, it is, nevertheless, in the present order of things very often a necessary condition of life and enjoyment; that it must be faced firmly and frequently by those who wish to extract the full value from a finite and limited existence, so that their very horror of pain should lead them to bear it; nay even to seek it, in their own interest or in that of others for whose happiness they live. They recognize that all creation is, as the Apostle writes, groaning and travailing, expecting its deliverance; that pain is the inevitable condition of growth and expansion; that life feeds upon death; that the present must die in giving birth to the future. No life, then, but at the cost of suffering seems the universal law of evolution. To survive is to struggle; to struggle is to suffer, and to cause suffering. And this law is extended from the physical into the moral and social world, and the men of science tell us that those who, shrinking from its seeming cruelty, would by some vain, utopian scheme end this struggle between man and man, with its attendant suffering, would in reality be courting social death and decay, would be multiplying for posterity those very evils they seek to avoid for themselves.

Thus those who hold most firmly that a life

of pleasure, a life free from pain, sorrow and affliction, is the one thing to aim at are quite willing to allow that only through many tribulations can we enter into the kingdom of enjoyment. "Either to suffer or to die." That is the fixed law; since those who flee the cross cannot grasp even the perishable crown of pleasure. The most selfish and shameless pleasure-seeker knows this; he sees clearly, and if he does not he will soon learn, that he must suffer for pleasure's sake; that he must deny himself and practice judicious self-restraint; that he must be a miser in economizing the enjoyments of life in the present for the sake of greater eventual gain of enjoyment in the future. Reflection and experience alike tell him that the pleasures of life stand out more brightly against a dark background of pain. Without suffering life, even for the votaries of pleasure, were not worth living; it would quickly exhaust itself and become flat, stale and unprofitable. The law then stands in every instance, "either to suffer or to die." If pleasure be life one must either suffer or die. Now there is another aspect of this law or gospel of pain. Take an instance: When the world was appalled and horrified that the flowing fire of Mount Pelée or the more recent eruption of Mount Vesuvius should have fallen upon the just and unjust; that innocent babes

and saintly men and women should have been overwhelmed in the company of the sinners of Saint Pierre. The death of thousands upon the island of Martinique was sudden, painful, terrific in the extreme. Many thoughtful minds were staggered by the inevitable questions which such a calamity suggested. Those "of little faith" may have asked, if there be a God, and whether He is an omnipotent being? How can He be good and righteous to permit this appalling catastrophe?

It is not surprising that those who estimate the evil of the world in terms of pain and sorrow should descant in no measured language on the cruelty of nature and should refuse to believe that behind all there is a personal God who could prevent this misery, suffering and death, and yet will not. If He could not, they say, how is He all-mighty? If He will not, how is He all-loving? In either case, how is He infinite; how is He God? This raises the world-old problem why God permits the existence of evil and pain. And the answer is this: We have no more cause to deny the existence of God because of a great and violent catastrophe than we have when a swollen stream drowns a home-going laborer on a dark night; or when the devouring flames of the Illinois theatre, due to human carelessness, consumed hundreds

of precious lives. The difference is not in kind, but only in degree. If we can trust God's purpose in the smaller mutations of life is there any sufficient reason to doubt it in the shock of earthquake or the eruption of the volcano? If we are to turn materialists we must find a better reason than that conveyed when death is simultaneous and multitudinous. Moreover, it is by means of such acts, that the human race is compelled to develop to the utmost its highest intellectual and its deepest moral functions. We can imagine without irreverence the Creator saying to His creatures: "I have given you inherent power to control and use all the forces of nature; not to build your own towns and cities beside slumbering volcanoes; if you do not choose to develop that power nor to use proper precaution then these pent-up forces of nature will slay you."

Again, if human happiness and freedom from pain and suffering were the final good of man; if the present life and enjoyment of sentient creation be, indeed, the ultimate goal, then it is hard to see the finger of the Almighty, the all-loving God in the fearful disasters that befall us. "If in this life only we have hope," says the Apostle, "then are we of all men the most miserable." But we believe there is a higher good and a higher life. And of this religion

speaks. What does it offer? This: Blessed are the mourners; blessed are the suffering; blessed are the dead; and it commends to us the example, not of one who was merely a martyr to inevitable violence, but of One who could have descended from the cross, yet would not.

THE LESSON OF THE WHEAT-FIELD.

“ And when the blade was sprung up, and had brought forth fruit, then appeared also the cockle.” *St. Matthew xiii. 26.*

SURELY no one ever taught as did Christ, the Lord! How direct, how simple, how beautiful was His teaching; every hearer could understand Him. He was specially fond of calling attention to the lessons that nature and the common things of every-day life teach us. The change of the seasons, the birds, the flowers, the grass of the field, the barren fig-tree, the growing wheat, the ripening harvest are examples of His method. He knew that man would always be close to Nature;—that when neither book, nor picture, nor teacher, nor perhaps the capacity to benefit by them would be available; that when school and church would be out of sight men and women would still have always and everywhere God’s beautiful world to look upon and study. And so the Master taught us to open betimes the great book of Nature, that we may find there the traces of the Creator’s handiwork, the faint reflections of His power, goodness, and beauty. It is not merely the

geologist and artist, but the saint and the Christian that can learn from Nature more than books can teach him. The heavens and the earth proclaim His glory, and those with eyes to see bear witness; those with ears properly attuned may hear the music of the spheres.

Turning to the lesson of the wheat-field, what is it? How does it apply to us? The farmer and the grain speculator look upon the beautiful wheat-fields as simply yielding so much per cent. in present or prospective gain on their labor or investment. But the blessed Saviour would have men look deeper and farther afield. He would have us see in the wheat-field a figure of the great world around us and also a picture of our own lives. He would have us see in the fresh, green blade that soon changes into the rich golden grain a figure of useful, holy lives, fruitful in good works; whilst in the cockle or weeds that grow in the same field are represented those lives that are useless and evil.

Year in and year out we have the seed-time and the harvest, reminding us of the great moral lesson that every day's experience confirms: "What things a man shall sow, that also shall he reap." As we look in this beautiful spring-time at the field of the busy farmer we feel certain that in spite of drought or rain or insect pests it will in due time show a rich harvest of

golden grain to reward his labor. So, too, if the farmer does not plant in due season; or puts poor seed into the ground, or fails to pluck up the weeds as they appear, when the harvest comes there will be nothing to reap save a crop of tares or cockle. The moral is obvious as applied to ourselves. It requires no great effort to observe whether a man is sowing in his body what will bring a harvest of want, poverty, and disease; or in his soul, evil habits, that will lead to endless ruin. As in fields and gardens, so in the human heart. "When the blade was sprung up, and had brought forth fruit;"—when example and training and grace seem to be taking effect in young lives, "then appears also the cockle." An evil thought dropped into the heart, like a downy thistle-seed in the field, grows into an evil word or deed; and evil deeds, by dint of repetition, into habits, that make us slaves of the "enemy" who in the Gospel is said to have sown the cockle." And there is another lesson from the wheat-field. The seeds were sown. They did not choose their own soil. Wherever they fall, there they have to spring up. There they have to draw their nourishment from the soil around them or the air above them, whether planted in a warm and sheltered valley or on a bleak and windy hill. They grow up and, in due time, are cut down and

stored away. Crop follows crop, year in, year out, in regular succession. And does not this make us think of life and death and the great field of the world, with its succeeding generations or crops of humanity duly cut down and harvested, God only knows where? Like the wheat, so to say, we are sown in the great field of the world by an unseen hand. We do not choose either the time or place of our birth. Where we are planted, there, for the most part, have we to spring up and live our lives, sometimes in sunshine, sometimes in storm, just as the wheat. It draws in from the moist soil, from the warm atmosphere all that is needful for its growth. It selects what is helpful and rejects what is injurious. So ought we to do. We should draw from our daily surroundings all that can nourish and strengthen our better nature, what can help us in the knowledge and service of God and our fellow man. From the books we read, the sermons we hear, the good example of companions, the warnings of conscience, the light and inspiration of the Holy Spirit we can daily and hourly draw spiritual food and strength. We can grow in wisdom and grace, as did our divine Model, before God and men. And this is possible under all conditions. In prosperity we can be grateful and thankful; in adversity, perhaps, the harvest of

our own sowing, we can be submissive, yet hopeful. In our trials and disappointments we can discern the chastening hand of the tender Father and skilled Physician.

What folly, then, to think and say as too many of us do: "how much happier and better off and more religious we should have become had we grown up in other fields and under kindlier skies; or if we had other people's chances!" Now it is well to remind persons who fall into this ugly mood that the great and good grow in all soils and in all climates; that virtue, true peace and happiness come not from without but from within ourselves; that the important thing is to make the best use of our opportunities and to keep the cockle of error and vice out of our lives. Few of us can choose our own place or position in life. We have all like the wheat and the flowers to make the best of the soil in which we are planted, whether it be a barren moorland or fertile valley. But this we should know: the harder our position, the worse our surroundings, the more will the loving Father help and protect us. Nay, the stronger and hardier we shall grow from having to fight our way upward to the light. Even from a dark corner it is possible, said the sage, to spring up to heaven. Students of nature find on the bleakest mountain crags, in the darkest recesses

of Alpine valleys, on the wild moors of Scotland, on the barren plains of our own Western prairie, the most delicate, brilliant and lovely flowers lifting their tiny heads upward to the light of heaven. And so, too, do we find in the most unlikely places among men and women some of the most beautiful and virtuous lives hidden away from the world with their hopes and aspirations always turned heavenwards.

Let our aim in life, then, be not to complain of our ill-fortune, nor to gaze idly and critically at the weeds in other men's lives, but to diligently cultivate the good seed sown in our own. For He is a truly wise man who is wise to his own soul.

OUR CHIEF BUSINESS.

“And you shall give testimony, because you are with Me from the beginning.” *St. John xv. 27.*

THAT was the chief business of the Apostles — to give testimony for Christ. It is no less the duty of every Christian man and woman of to-day. Never was there a time in the history of Christianity when there was greater need to bear witness to the faith. Doubt and unbelief are prevalent; materialism and sensualism abound; many persons are so occupied with finding their heaven here that they give but little thought to the heaven hereafter. Hence, the necessity to-day of giving testimony for Christ and His Kingdom.)

When two nations are at war with one another it is easy to distinguish the soldiers on either side. They are recognized by their colors, their uniforms, their flags. So must the Christian who follows the banner of the Cross be easily distinguished from those who are giving their service solely to this world. In the struggle that is going on he must be found always on the side of the Master and against the

prince of darkness; he must fight valiantly for truth and right against the powers of evil and falsehood; he must have the strength and courage of the soldier; he must not falter in his duty.

Now, the Apostles gave their testimony for Christ by preaching His gospel, by leading holy lives and by the working of miracles. Most of them sealed their testimony with their blood. They suffered death for their faith. We may not be called on to do all that. This, however, we must do,—we must imitate the Master; we must lead a life worthy of His followers, so that as Christians we can at once be distinguished from non-Christians. This is the best way in which we can give testimony for our Divine Lord.

How are we discharging this duty? Are our lives all that they ought to be? Is our business conducted as becomes a Christian? Are we interested in bettering the condition of those around us? Are we making the world around us brighter and better? Are we always on the side of good government and decent politics in our city and state? Are we doing something to lighten the burdens of the poor and miserable? The answer to these and similar questions proclaims the nature of our testimony,—whether it be for or against Christ.

Let us see in a practical way how we meet this call to duty. Here is a ragged street boy, crying: "Shine sir?" He is a mere child, barefoot, unwashed, unkempt, with a prematurely old look in his face. We see him daily and pass him by. Yet something within us says: "Was it for this that a soul came into the world?" Is this boy's life my concern? Has this poor mite of humanity a fair opportunity? And if he has not, where lies the blame? What can I, as a Christian and citizen, do to better his condition? Now if I set myself to help that poor, ragged newsboy or boot-black, I am imitating Christ, bearing testimony for Him.

Again, yonder is a young man of respectable appearance, perhaps of good family, unsteadily making his way across the crowded street. It is plainly evident that he is intoxicated. The use which he is making of the city's opportunities for vice has already put its brand of shame upon him. It takes no prophet to forecast his future. Yet it is scarcely probable that this young man from the fashionable quarter of town has deliberately chosen to become degraded; it can hardly be conceived that he has calmly chosen to die as the fool dieth. Shall I allow him to go his way and do nothing to help him? Shall I say to myself when the voice within me

cries out: "No, I am not my brother's keeper," let the police look after him; it is none of my business; let others see to him. Is this imitating the model of Him who sought out sinners and healed them? Is this giving testimony for Christ?

Once more; let us look nearer home at ourselves. How do we behave when things do not go right with us? When our business does not prosper? When false friends deceive us? When the calumniator's tongue wounds us? When long sickness and bodily pain torment us? Do we suffer and endure with patience as He did who gave us an example that we should follow? If we do, we are giving testimony for Christ in a way that cannot be gainsaid. But if, on the other hand, all our thoughts and actions are centred in ourselves, in our business; all our energies of mind and body directed to the acquisition of wealth and the passing things of this world; if we are devoting our days to pleasure; if we harbor feelings of revenge against others and will not forget their slights and insults; how can we said to be giving testimony of Christ? Is not this much the way of the heathen and has little to do with Christ's way?

Furthermore, consider the life of Christ, to which the life of a true Christian should bear

some likeness. St. Bernard writes: "Under the name of Jesus I picture to myself a man humble and meek of heart; kind, temperate, chaste, merciful;— in short One distinguished in every virtue and holiness." His teaching is witness that He was perfect in the practice of all which He taught. He says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit," and from His birth in the stable until His death upon the cross He was an abject, the poorest of the poor, "He had not where to lay His head."

"Blessed are the meek," He says and He forgives not only the wrong done to Him, but He rewards it with the richest of blessings. "Blessed are the sorrowful;" He expiated our sins by His death and wept over them tears of blood. "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after justice;" His food was to do the will of His Father. "Blessed are the merciful;" He heaped good deeds upon His enemies. "Blessed are the peacemakers;" He made peace between God and man. "Blessed are those who suffer persecution for justice sake;" He bears hatred and persecution on account of His teaching.

And how is it with us? Is the sermon on the mount preached daily in our conversation and conduct? It is told of St. Francis of Assisi that one day he asked one of the brothers to accompany him into the streets of the city.

He was going, he said, to preach a sermon. The brother was always delighted to hear St. Francis preach. They walked through the streets for some time and returned to the convent. "Why," said the brother, "Father Francis, you have forgotten to preach that sermon!" "Not at all," replied the holy man, "we preached a splendid sermon by our demeanor and manner on the streets, by our conversation with the people we met." And then the lay-brother understood. It is no less the duty of every Christian to do some of this preaching on the street, in the workshop, in the home, in his place of business by the practice of those virtues that make our lives Christ-like. This is the best argument we can use against the enemies of religion; for it removes doubt and silences unbelief; it is the strongest testimony for Christ and makes sure the victory that overcometh the world — our faith.

AN UGLY VICE.

“God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.” *1 St. Peter v. 5.*

PRIDE is a common and a very ugly vice. In fact it is counted among the first of the capital or deadly sins. There are three distinct forms under which pride commonly displays itself — pride of birth, pride of intellect, pride of riches.

Now one would naturally suppose that pride of birth should be confined to such countries and places as are under the dominion of Kings and Emperors, where nobility of birth carries with it the added dignity of rank and power. But such, as we know, is not the case, for we may find it as strongly developed here in democratic America as in what we are sometimes pleased to style the effete monarchies of the Old World. We frequently meet with people of meagre attainments, brusque manners and vulgar bearing who are yet filled with haughty assurance, professing to be descended from illustrious ancestors. And how sad oftentimes is the contrast between the profession and the individual who makes boast of his noble descent!

Unless such claims have the support of unusual grace, goodness, and virtue they are more foolish and absurd than those of the forlorn old lady of whom Hawthorne writes, whose sole title to gentility consisted in a few rusty silk dresses and her recollection of having in her younger days thrummed a harpsicord, danced a minuet and worked an antique tapestry stitch on her sampler.

The other day just as the Newport season was closing everybody was congratulating everybody else on the success with which the "400" had entertained distinguished foreign visitors along came the horrid announcement from the British College of Heralds that created consternation in the ranks of "our fashionable set." An official pronunciamento cuts down "the 400" with one fell swoop to 177, stating in a cold-blooded, awful way that in all America there is only that number of families of "the real sort." Only a beggarly 177 in this revised list of blue-blooded society of the international brand, warranted to work satisfactorily on both sides of the Atlantic and to withstand the wear and tear of social inspection here and abroad. We can well imagine the anguish of mind and the feminine outcries that followed the publication of this list when the omissions were noted!

If the knowledge of gentle birth impels men

to imitate noble deeds of honorable ancestors — to uphold virtue and condemn vice — then assuredly its power need not be ignored. But unless this is the case it is far better to be honest, upright and Christian, without any certain knowledge of one's parentage, than while having the bluest of blood to be boastful, indolent and careless of the rights of our fellow men.

Next there is pride of intellect. Now an active and vigorous brain is a splendid endowment. Whoever adds to the world's treasury of wisdom is worthy of honor, but to look down upon our associates because of such mental endowment is a proof of weakness and must be displeasing to the Almighty. Let the wisest man compare the knowledge he has attained with that which still lies beyond his grasp, or even his comprehension, and he will be forced to confess himself ignorant and ill-informed indeed. Complete knowledge is unattainable by any human being. Why, then, should any one be proud of his limited share? It is said there was a temple of a great pagan goddess, in lower Egypt, which was once the centre of wisdom for Greece, whose foremost men in the early days went thither for their training, and upon the veiled image of the goddess was this significant inscription: "I am all that was, that is,

and that is to be, and my veil has been lifted by no man."

Another form of pride arises from the possession of great wealth. As our multi-millionaires increase this form of pride is likely to increase also in America. Already this is one of the most glaring as it surely is the most offensive and contemptible of all the ugly exhibitions which pride makes of itself. It shows itself most frequently in the desire for exclusiveness and the power to assume great state and dignity. It is even happy if it can arouse jealousy. To have many houses, to ride out in great style, to wear fine clothes, to fare sumptuously, to own a yacht, a private railroad car, and an automobile, to command an army of servants, to outdo one's neighbors — surely this does not seem like a very high ambition; yet it invariably fosters pride.

There are undoubtedly rich people who are an honor and an ornament to society; who are liberal, conscientious, thoughtful and beneficent. But there are others who care only for their own pleasures and pre-eminence, avaricious to the last degree and utterly inconsiderate of their fellow men, their joys, sorrows, or sufferings.

We may here recall the incident told to illustrate the condition of society in France before

the great revolution, and which produced that catastrophe. An aristocrat whose carriage had crushed the life out of a poor child stopped his horses for a moment, tossed a gold coin to the father of the dead child and drove on. But the coin was flung after the carriage and rang upon its floor. "Hold the horses!" cried the aristocrat. "Who threw that?" There being no answer, he shouted, "Wretches, I would ride over any of you very willingly and exterminate you from the earth!" Possibly this incident will recall some of the accidents that are occurring at the present time in our own country. "Pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall."

We should learn humility from the example of our Blessed Lord who humbled Himself and came down to earth to save us from sin and pride and death. If we are of gentle birth let us show others by our gentleness, courtesy and regard for them that we value the example of the divine Master above any merely human ancestor. If we have a fine intellect and great talents let us use them for the uplifting and betterment of our brethren. If we have great wealth let us employ it wisely, beneficently and as faithful stewards of the good God who has bestowed it upon us.

“THE HOUSE OF MIRTH.”

“Who shall find a valiant woman?” *Proverbs xxxi.*
10.

A LITTLE while ago one of our Bishops publicly declared that women are responsible for three-fourths of the evil of the world. We have been in the habit of thinking and saying that they were the “salt of the earth”—the element that has kept and is keeping society from corruption and decay. Can it be that all of us are wrong and that the good Bishop is right? This is what he said: “If the women of the land were larger-minded, more thoughtful, more intelligent, three-fourths of the depravity and sin that curse present-day life would disappear. The seat of the development of the child is in the home. To woman man must leave the training of the boys and girls that are to be the fathers and mothers of the future. Shall she be false, ungrateful and traitorous to the trust man has reposed in her?”

Nor was the good bishop alone in his view. A distinguished man of letters was recently invited to lecture before one of the most aristo-

cratic women's clubs in Paris; to their amazement, he began by telling them that, with all their pretensions, they knew nothing of literature, of politics, and of many other things they should know. Continuing he said: "You pretend to be interested in these questions, but really you are not. Your days are freely devoted to foolish amusements and useless actions; interminable toilet making; seances with dress-makers; luncheons, dinners, pink teas; so-called literary lectures, receptions, balls and theatres. You spend your time in gossip which is stupid when it is not wicked. You grovel with astonishing alacrity to gain admittance into social circles above your own, and cannot conceal your contempt for people supposedly below yourselves." That is a severe indictment of our best society.

It would seem the fashionable women of Paris are much the same as the fashionable women of our own cities, and that the view of the modern woman held by the French novelist does not differ from that of our American Bishop. Some time ago it was told how the women of Italy worshipped at the shrine of a notorious brigand, sending him during his trial gushing letters and imploring the King to pardon him. Professor Lombroso, the psychologist, is quoted as saying: "Great crimes always exercise a fascination

over women, especially if they have a romantic or chivalrous aspect." The newspapers of the country made the incident a text for their periodical comment on "hysterical and sentimental women." Recently I was reading a most delightful contribution to reminiscent literature entitled "An Onlooker's Notebook," by a scion of the English house of Russell, the social head of which is the present Duke of Bedford. The work may be described as a commentary on the changes which English society has undergone in the last century. Discussing the social emancipation of women the writer calls attention to the fact that the "emancipated ones," feeling that one good turn deserves another, have released men from all restraints of ceremony. Mr. Russell tells us that the barriers of reticence on certain subjects between men and women have been broken down. Satirists used to be sarcastic about things which modern society is ashamed to talk about, but not ashamed to commit. Mr. Russell says that "the taunt has lost its poignancy; for, whether people in society commit these enormities or not, they certainly are ready enough to talk about them. I speak advisedly when I say that I know no offense too scandalous or too abhorrent for respectable matrons to discuss; and though, of course, the discussion takes the form of reprobation it is a surprising de-

parture from conversational decorum." According to our author "It's not the sort of a book one would give one's mother to read" was a description of a notorious novel. Mr. Russell also vouches for the following anecdote: "A mother was sending her youngest boy to Eton, and, in talking over his new life, she gave him the sagest of all mother's counsels,—never listen to anything which he would not like his sisters to hear. He gazed with awestruck eyes, and then replied with emotion: "I should not, indeed, mother! If Polly and Kitty couldn't hear it it must be awful.'"

This English onlooker who knows society intimately, tells us that drunkenness among society women is rapidly increasing, while it is decreasing among men. And he points out the causes for this: A delicate and highly strung woman, living a life of eternal racket which demands twice the strength she possesses, is counselled to have a glass of port whenever she feels collapsed; or to keep a brandy flask in her dressing case. She follows the prescription, feels better for it, increases it, depends upon it, craves it. "The rest is silence."

In Mr. Russell's opinion the great multiplication of ladies' clubs has contributed to the same result. A woman who would think twice before she drank an unusual quantity of wine

at her own table is hampered by no such scruples when dining at a club where she is unobserved and unknown. The writer says,— and few will dispute his competence to testify,— that in English society the exhibition of deference to women is now as extinct as the dodo. It goes without saying that if decorum has vanished, women can no longer expect to be treated with the old conventional respect. And if they are not, here or abroad, so treated they have no one to blame but themselves. Now the answer that is generally given in defense of women is this: Women, it is said, are exactly what men have wished them to be. They are carrying out, to the best of their ability, the teachings they had in the past. It is urged in her defense that the average woman had, until very recently, a single ideal, and that was the one made for her by man. She did not think, or act, or speak for herself. If a solitary woman here and there dared to set up a different standard she was crucified by men and held up as a horrible example for all other women to avoid. It is claimed that the progressive women of to-day have gained that little only by living up to their own conceptions of the highest womanhood in defiance of those so tenaciously cherished by men; that the masses of women are struggling through the transition from the old to the new

ideals, and that when the struggle is over all will be well with womankind. We would wish to so believe if we could. If the facts cited be true there is faint encouragement for hope. They show a decline of the finer instincts of womanhood, and a loss of that Christian conscience which can distinguish not only between what is right and wrong, but between what is dignified and what is undignified both for men and women. Thoughtful persons note in these facts the sign of an inverted state of society — the putting woman out of her proper sphere. It may be generally said of women that they are for the most part good or bad, as they fall in with those who practice vice or virtue; that neither education nor refinement gives them much security against the powerful influence of example. Whether it be that they have less courage to stand against opposition, or that the desire of admiration makes them sacrifice their principles to the poor pleasure of worthless praise; or because of the decline of religious faith; it is certain, whatever be the cause, that female goodness seldom keeps its ground against flattery or fashion or the fads of the age.

“Where are the old, calm faces we used to see?” asks a recent French writer. They are, indeed, rarely to be seen. Now, says the French woman, “We see only a dull restless-

ness and a restless dullness." Who has not felt the truth of that? How rare it is to see those faces of women that have the stillness as of hushed water in them; "the exquisite eyes of silent blessedness;" the luminous beauty of a great peace! The calm faces are gone because the calm life that made them is gone. We are living in the throes of an intensely energetic age. If our faces are eager we do but reflect our environment. One cannot have the face of the dreamer without the dream; the quiet eyes of a saint without the thoughts and discipline of the saint. If woman is less than she ought to be it is because she has forgotten her ideals or has exchanged her old ones for the new; the true for the false standard by which she is willing to be measured. Women, much more than men, are governed by ideals. What we think, we are; what we think most of, we most resemble.

BETTER THAN RICHES.

“Our glory is this, the testimony of our conscience.”
2 Cor. i. 12.

WE have different standards of measurement. Our moral weights and measures are as various as those we find in the stores and marts of trade. Some of them are false standards and hence the weight or measurement is unjust. Others vary as men change their views and judgments of things. In an age like our own, for instance, it would be hard to convince some people that “a good name is better than riches”; and yet that is undoubtedly true. There are all around us people who are ready to barter that most precious thing,—the testimony of a good conscience—for wealth, no matter how secured. We read and hear of such persons every day. They cast to the winds their good name for the sake of ill-gotten gains. They even go farther: they try to set up as a justification of their wrong-doing a false standard of measurement. And they succeed fairly well in perverting the judgments of others. The young are especially led astray by this false standard of meas-

urement; hence we find to-day many a young man entering life with brightest prospects who is reckless of "his good name." Let us try and convince our young people of the great value and importance of a good name. What is a good name? A good name in the sense in which we wish to use it here is not so much the name illumined by a glorious and chivalrous ancestry, but one which the bearer himself has made valuable by identifying it with good deeds, worthy of being extolled for their usefulness and value, and capable of wholesome imitation by others.

A good name is the exponent of a good life; and a good life is made up of the various elements of good deeds; of elevating thoughts; of industry, which not alone brings rich spiritual and material advantages to the possessor, but also sets forth its utility and attractiveness to others for their edification and guidance. Now, the past and the present are filled with the names of noble men and women made beautiful and fragrant by their association with generous deeds, integrity, high principles, and sterling honesty. We have characters made eminent by sanctity, by the sacrifice of time, money, labor and even life, in order to render better and happier the conditions of those around them who are struggling with poverty and sin. A per-

son who has justly gained a good name is one who is possessed of a good heart; one who unselfishly lives not alone for himself or his own gain, but warms to the piteous appeals of misery with generous assistance and an outstretched hand of sympathy. Youth is the time to lay the foundation of a good name, when one is at the threshold of life's duties. We can, if we will, profit by the experience of others who have trod the path before us and we too can "leave our footprints on the sands of time."

We are not bound to become rich; we are not bound to become great, nor highly accomplished; but we are bound to be honest and truthful; to maintain sound principles and integrity of life:—

"Good name in man and woman, dear my lord,
Is the immediate jewel of their souls."

How forcibly and truly does the great dramatist here set forth the value of a name without reproach! He calls it the immediate jewel of the soul; the most precious gift one can possess; the only fame or glory worth having, after all, is the good opinion of the wise and just. Now, youth is the time to acquire a name which others will honor and respect; for the events of youth are stamped in the memory of age as the "primeval footmarks made in clay are preserved in stone." Write, then, your name among

your associates in the store, office, or place of business in love and kindness and good deeds and it will ever remain there in benediction.

In our daily intercourse with people; in the transaction of business, we feel more confidence and safety in dealing with a man whose reputation for honesty is above suspicion; we know that he has earned this character by his deeds; that the sterling stamp of truth, honor and uprightness has been placed there by his fellows. It is still true, though some may question it, that "honesty is the best policy." The business or professional man who keeps his engagements; who is upright and just in his dealings; courteous and considerate in his bearing, will always win and maintain the confidence of his fellow-men. If the dark days of trouble and disaster come upon him, he may find that his name will bring staunch friends to his rescue; he will not be wholly abandoned.

The example which the possessor of a good name can furnish is truly wonderful in its influence and effectiveness. Precept is excellent, is valuable, and necessary; but in a great many instances it is like advice written upon the sands of the seashore, only to be washed away by the flowing tide and all record of it destroyed; but example is as if graven upon the weather-beaten rocks which the fury of the gale and the lash-

ings of the waves cannot blot out. The Scriptural proverb says, "The memory of the just is blessed; but the name of the wicked shall be forgotten." The good actions and words of the one shall surround his name with glory and praise, whilst the wickedness and crimes and injustices of the other pour upon his memory execration and hatred.

When we leave this world there is nothing material we can take with us. "Dead men's shrouds have no pockets." There is much that we can leave behind, however. What? Debts, a blighted home; a mischievous record; dishonesty; bad counsel; children and followers who may hurl maledictions after us and assail our names for the evil example and teachings we have given; a community suffering from our misdeeds, mistakes, foolishness, incompetency, carelessness, malicious misdirection and wrongdoing. From all this we conclude that it should be the aim of every young man to win for himself a good name. To do this he should guard against all evil influences and temptations; he should be honest and candid with himself as well as with those around him; he should devote himself to the service of others; he should love the higher and better things of life; he should never appropriate to his own use what belongs to others; nor counsel nor approve a theft

or what is called "a sharp turn in business"; in fine, he should aim to have as his only glory the testimony of a good conscience. For a good name is in the end better than all else this world can give.

Above all he should follow the example of Him whose name is above all other names for Holiness, Goodness, Truth, and it will be well with him in the end.

THE WAY OF THE CROSS.

“All ye that pass by the way, attend and see if there is any sorrow like to my sorrow.” *Lamentations i. 12.*

A LITTLE while ago there was shown in one of our picture galleries a painting that attracted much attention. The subject was an old and familiar one but presented in a new and very striking light. Not one of the large number of visitors to the gallery passed it by; there was always a group of interested persons looking at the canvas. The figures stood out prominently and the story that the painting told was easily understood by the observer. It represented a hurrying, eager throng, each of whom is intent upon that which interests him most. One figure, reeling in drunkenness, tries to fix his unsteady gaze upon his wine-glass; another is occupied with the dice; there is the miser clutching his gold; the trader busy with his merchandise; the politician laying his schemes for place and power; the devotée of pleasure with easy manner and merry laugh; the harlot scattering her deceitful smiles, while in the centre of the canvas above them all, hangs the figure

so familiar to our eyes, but often so far from our hearts, of the dying Saviour on the cross. The subject of this striking painting with its incidents is common enough and as old as the first Good-Friday. Then, as now, no doubt the slaves of pleasure and of riches followed their own devices, not only throughout the pagan world, but in the City of Jerusalem itself beneath the very shadow of the cross. Was not Christ nailed thereon by the ambition of a politician and time-server, Pontius Pilate, and the interested fears of the priests? Even in the darkness that settled upon the mount of crucifixion, did not the soldiers cast dice for His garments? Did not His enemies exult in their vengeance? Did not the hurrying passers-by wag their heads and utter their coarse, vulgar jests? And did not the thief,—companion of His suffering,—mock at the gentle, agonizing Being that hung beside him on the cross?

Now, the cross greets our eyes everywhere. It stands foremost upon our altars and gleams in the sunshine from the spires of our churches. It crowns the heads of princes and hangs on the bare walls of the lowliest hovels. It is seen in wood or brass upon the girdle of the religious and glitters in gold and diamonds on the neck of the society woman. But wherever it be, it speaks to us of man's guilt, the necessity of re-

pentance, the love of Christ, and the mercy of the good God. How often it is seen; yet how seldom are its lessons heeded! The world, busy with its own affairs, looks upon it and hurries by in its quest for wealth or place or power,—one to his farm, another to his merchandise. The commercial spirit is so strong, the struggle of our modern life so fierce, so absorbing as to leave little or no time for recalling a story as old as that of Calvary. The cross pleads in vain when the poor and lowly are done to death by a cruel despotism in Russia or driven to despair by greed and injustice in our own land; it pleads in vain when men's lives are sacrificed; when soul and mind are stunted; when men and women are chained to slavery at desk or workshop, in the stifling factory, or in the damp and dangerous mine; it pleads in vain when children are tied by poverty to vice in our low tenement quarters and girls are driven to lives of shame. Truly, if He who died on the cross looks upon our exchanges and marts of trade, He attracts little attention there. Most of us do not care to study or even look upon that painting of Christ looking down upon the busy throng on the street.

Self-love, self-indulgence, blinds many of us to that picture. Our ease, our comfort, our pleasures, occupy our whole thought. The way

that leads to the cross is rough and thorny ; it is more comfortable to keep far from it. It demands mortification that is not convenient, lowliness of mind that revolts our pride. It teaches sorrow, not a perfunctory sorrow, but sincere, heartfelt grief for sin ; it is too hard to travel the rough road of the Cross. It requires that we should stoop down in the dust, and cleanse the fetid wounds of our rude, erring, suffering brother, and give up the oil of our ease, and the wine of our pleasure for his benefit. The world passes by, and with the wretched sufferer passes also Christ on the Cross. Our minds are too full of self to give the attention that we ought to the piteous moving spectacle on Calvary.

Religious indifference is widespread. It may be the most common, but it is scarcely the worst form of outrage against the Saviour of men. Those dying eyes look upon a Gehenna of unspeakable foulness, and the eyes of the sinner are averted from the wounds incurred because of his sin. " Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," thus He prayed for those who crucified Him. A miracle of forgiving mercy ! Yet, unmoved by the crime which they have caused, men pass daily beneath the shadow of the cross, to crucify again the Son of God, and make a mockery of Him. Those eyes, so near their closing, are the eyes of the

All-Seeing. No sinful deed of ours, so well hidden; no thought so secret, but His glance pierces their defences and sees all their hideousness. Would that we might see Him always! But we have eyes, and see not, because, like them of whom it was said of old, we do not care to see. And yet, in spite of our blindness and of our indifference, the Crucified is the one object most worthy of our attention. We, like St. Paul, should be glad to know only Christ and Him crucified. For His death is our hope.

There is one day in the year, however, the Friday that is called Good, when even the world itself pauses to look upon the Cross. Well will it be for us if we learn its lesson of sorrow and suffering, of mercy and love. Let us look and see if there be any sorrow like unto His sorrow, and let us keep treasured deeply in our hearts the memory of His bitter Passion and Death. Let us cling to the Cross of Christ with loving fidelity, for in it lies our only hope of peace here and of happiness hereafter.

LABORING IN THE NIGHT.

"Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing; but, at Thy word I will let down the net."
St. Luke v. 5.

ST. PETER was without doubt a good fisherman, and a patient one, as all good fishermen are. He was content to fish all night with such poor luck as to catch nothing. But in the early morning after he had taken the Master on board his ship it seemed as if all the fish in the lake found their way into the nets. Such a wonderful haul was made that Peter and his companions were utterly astonished. They could not account for it. They never had any experience like this before. How greatly pleased they were with this unexpected success may well be imagined.

The most interesting and attractive part of the story is to be found in the simple, child-like and submissive words of him who was afterwards to be a fisher of men. Here on Lake Genesareth the Apostle passed through his training school, preparing himself for his future labors. The fisherman, Simon, labored the whole night and found himself defeated in his efforts;

and when the Master bade him "Launch out into the deep and let down the nets for a draught," he, half in despair and yet encouraged to new hopes, said: "At Thy word I will let down the net." When the result showed him the reward of faith, and when, on the other hand, Christ found this humble fisherman ready to throw to the wind all reasoning and experience and to abide by His word, He then gave him the sublime commission, "Simon, fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men." Simon passed the test, and proved himself worthy of his calling.

There is a lesson for all of us in this incident in the life of St. Peter. And the lesson is this: that the work of man without God is fruitless; it is the labor of night and is unsuccessful. This is the verdict of experience and of history. Since the first man was cast out of Eden and the Cherubim with flaming sword was placed at the entrance of the earthly paradise, the struggle of mankind commenced, and for long and weary years it was a fruitless labor of the Night. As we glance down the ages, our eye meets everywhere a laboring, struggling, toiling humanity. At the end of every undertaking we hear the despairing cry: "We have labored all night, and we have taken nothing."

The mental net of the Greeks was let down

into the deep of philosophic speculation to fathom the depth of wisdom, but in vain. The craving to explain the mysteries of Nature, to learn of its laws and principles and to find the cause of all things, was undertaken by the best and wisest among them. And when they reached the very summit of speculation, some were seeking a God who was far away from them, and others worshipped a God who remained unknown to them, and their own testimony was that it was a labor of the Night without much success.

It was so with the Roman Empire, that stupendous monument of human genius that attracted the attention and captivated the admiration of the world, and ruled the nations of the earth for a thousand years with its wonderful code of laws and marvelous civilization. It too was the fruitless work of the Night that ended in despair, and finally tottered to its ruin. When the fall of that mighty power took place, a cry of despair went up: "We have labored the whole night, and we have taken nothing"; that was the most fitting epitaph to write upon the ruins of the fallen Empire.

Thus it ever was, and ever will be, that the best and noblest undertaking of mankind which is not directed by God and has not its origin in Him, is a fruitless and unsuccessful struggle, a

groping in the dark, a toil and a laborious task of the night.

Does not the experience of individuals confirm what history has shown us to be true of nations? Unless the Lord be with us our toil is vain and idle. Whatever we undertake in daily life, in the interest of the nation or in the interest of the home or the church, if these works have their origin in ourselves and have no other guidance but that of man, they prove in the end to be nothing better than the fruitless labor of the Night; they leave the soul empty and the heart discontented. Take the Christian religion away from us; wipe its precepts out of the memory of man and all other works of the greatest undertakings, though magnificently planned and skillfully executed, adding to our national glory, extending our jurisdiction and sphere of influence and opening many doors for our industrial and commercial enterprises, this nation would but represent a struggling and toiling mass of humanity, the summing up of whose work and its results would be best expressed in the despairing cry: "We have labored the whole night, and have taken nothing." The cry of despair always brings God to our rescue, and when in docility and confidence we submit to His word, then we see the glorious results of a work directed by God and carried on by faith.

Reason and experience taught Simon, the fisherman, that any new effort to catch fish would be a waste of energy and time. As a fisherman he was well experienced in all that pertained to his work, and he had just spent a whole night together with his companions, to find himself defeated in his efforts. But having heard Christ preaching to the multitude from his own ship; having observed how the people hung upon His lips, devouring every word of divine wisdom and truth which He uttered and undoubtedly stirred and moved by these words himself, thus regarding Christ as a great Master in Israel, he took His suggestion as a command from on high and said, "At Thy words, I will let down the net." The result shows that he was not disappointed. His ready and child-like submission to the word of Christ was amply rewarded. And so will it be with us if we are ready to follow the guidance of the Master.

“AND THEN, WHAT?”

“My days have been swifter than a post — they have passed by as ships carrying fruits, as an eagle flying to the prey.” *Job ix. 25, 26.*

THERE are times in the lives of all of us when we find ourselves confronted by the thought of the brevity of this life and the certainty of death. A dear friend, a fond parent, a delightful companion, a trusted associate in business, some one whom we loved very tenderly has passed away. We feel and bewail our loss. A dark shadow has suddenly fallen across our path. For days and weeks we are filled with gloom and sadness. This world that was so beautiful and fair before has all at once lost its attractions. Its brightness is obscured. We no longer see things as we did whilst our departed friend was near us. A great burden lies upon us; we want to be let alone in our grief. All of us have had, some time or other in our lives, such a bitter experience. It is at such a time we begin to reflect seriously on the shortness of life and the nearness of death. And it is good for us to make then, if not at

other times, such reflections — that our days run swifter than a post; that they pass like ships across the ocean of which we soon lose sight.

It reminds me of a sermon I heard in my far-off boyhood days. The sermon came in the regular course of what is called a “retreat.” During a “retreat” those making it are supposed to withdraw their minds from things of this world, and to concentrate their thoughts entirely on the world which lies beyond the grave. And as part of this discipline everybody who joins in a “retreat” is supposed to remain silent while it lasts. It is a time when the soul, thrown back upon itself, has abundant opportunity for serious reflection, and especially for reflections which deal with the vanity of all things human. It was in the midst of this environment of silence, continuous prayer, solemn and somewhat sombre meditation, that the preacher preached a sermon founded on a famous anecdote of St. Philip Neri,—the saint who is the patron of the Oratorian Fathers, the order which Cardinal Newman chose as most suitable to his temperament after he had joined the Church. St. Philip was speaking to some young nobleman of his country and time, and was trying to impress upon him the great lesson that this life was but a fleeting show, and that the really serious and momentous thing was the

life beyond. The young nobleman, full of courage, daring and ambitious, was telling the self-collected father of all the wondrous things he intended doing in the course of his career which at the moment was just opening to him its bright dawn of dazzling hope and illimitable joy. And under the apparent encouragement of the good father the youth went on passing from step to step up the giddy ladder of fame, power, wealth, and pleasure. The priest, listening attentively, only broke the silence by the one phrase "And then?"

"I will command my regiment," said the cavalier. "And then?" said the friar. "Then I will command several regiments." "And then?" repeated the priest. "And then I shall perhaps become commander-in-chief." "And then?" again was the refrain of St. Philip. "And then, perhaps — who knows? — I may be king." "And then?" said the holy priest, in the same unmoved voice. "And then; why, I may be Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire." "And then?" in the same unimpassioned tones. Just then the young cavalier stopped short in his rush of words and flight of dreams, and looking at the grave face of the priest, suddenly realized that death is the end of all human glory, and that his ambitions were, after all, but the pursuit of shadows.

That is the old story of which I was reminded the other day as I was reading the account of the late Conclave in Rome. For in the election of the Pope care is always taken to preach again that old gospel of Philip Neri,—the very same gospel which was taught centuries before by Solomon. I read that as the Pope was passing in triumphal procession to the throne of Peter, a priest walked before him burning some tow, and as it burned, the priest exclaimed, “*Sic transit gloria mundi*” — “So passes the glory of the world.” It was perhaps, a similar thought that made Philip of Macedon offer additional sacrifices to the gods when he heard that he had on the same day won a great race and had born to him a son who was destined to be afterwards known as Alexander the Great. There is also an analogy between this ceremony in the greatest Christian church of the world and that custom the Romans had of putting the slave at the car of the Consul as he marched in triumph up the Appian Way, to remind him that there is always something bitter in even the sweetest hour of human glory. For the haunting sense of the transience and uncertainty of human affairs runs through every chapter, every epoch, every creed of humanity.

There is another thought, too, suggested by the election of the new Pope. The attentive

reader of the articles bearing on this ceremony could not have failed to observe that Pius X not only did not expect, but did not want the great office to which he had been elected. It is said that he wept and trembled when he began to realize that his colleagues and fellow-Cardinals were turning from Cardinal Rampolla and Cardinal Gotti, and the other great and illustrious ecclesiastics of the conclave, to him who was but a poor country parish priest, ignorant of every country and of every language but his own. He was quite honest, sincere no doubt, in this self-distrust, and really shrank from the well-nigh appalling responsibilities to which he was raised. His whole attitude since has confirmed this report. Everything shows a reluctance to be transferred from his quiet home in Venice, and comparatively humble position, to the giddy elevation in the centre of the Christian world.

And so it often happens that the man who obtains the greatest prize is the one who cares least for it, enjoys it least, suffers most under it. Look at the political, business, or social world, and say if it be not so. Here we find a man who puts away from him in something like sheer wantonness or caprice the leadership of a great party or a great business; and on the other hand see another man who is ready to barter his very soul and half the world for the

coveted prize. The saying is not altogether true that the battle is always to the strong and the race to the swift. Life in these things is unaccountable, ever surprising, a great deal of a puzzle. There is but one thing certain,—that it is brief, like the flight of the eagle upon its prey;—that no man has that which he most wants, and that even when men do reach the very pinnacle of that fame and glory of which they have dreamed they are often haunted by the ever recurrent refrain of the preacher,—
 “And what then?”

HOW TO WIN THE CROWN.

“So run that you may obtain.” *1 Cor. ix. 24.*

ST. PAUL was writing to his Corinthian converts. Corinth was at the time a bye-word even among the pagans for its luxury and profligacy. “The Orient,” says Fouard, “brought thither its perverse and shameful passions, Rome its pitiless brutality and bloody sports.” It was a wicked place, undoubtedly. It had its temple of Venus with its thousand priestesses; vice and moral degradation, such as were found there, were unequalled in the black annals of paganism. It is no wonder that the apostle was disturbed about his newly-converted Christians living in such a place, familiarized from childhood with unspeakable sights and associations. “What must I say to those spiritual children? How am I to keep moral life in them who are forced to breathe such a poisoned atmosphere? What antidote am I to propose?” These doubtless were his thoughts before he sat down to write this first letter to the Christians of Corinth. “I shall tell them this,” he concluded, “to adopt a course of spiritual training, to dis-

cipline themselves, to practice self-restraint and bodily mortification." This is the only safeguard; nothing else will do; only thus can they hope to preserve themselves from the contagion all round them and keep themselves unspotted from the corrupt doings of Corinth; "they must learn" as he himself did, "to chastise their bodies and bring them into subjection."

And in order to bring this lesson home to them with the fullest possible force, the Apostle uses an illustration which was very familiar to them. At Corinth were held the famous Isthmian games, revived at Athens in our own day, in which athletes from the whole Roman empire contended for the mastery. He reminds them of the training to which those young men voluntarily subjected themselves in order that they might gain the prize and the glory it brought with it. And yet this prize so eagerly sought after was but a crown of parsley! "Do you know," he says, "that those who run in the race, all run, but only one gains the prize? So run, that you may obtain! And every man who striveth for the mastery abstains from all things; but they that they may gain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible one."

This metaphor so familiar to the Corinthians is not less so to ourselves. It appeals to our young men with their modern devotion to ath-

letics, as forcibly as it did to the ancient Greeks. Many of us have known the discipline imposed on those who are training for a race, and there are few young men to whom the words of Epictetus will not go home: "Would you be a victor in the Olympic games? So indeed would I, for it is a glorious thing; but consider what must precede — and follow, and so enter on the contest. You must live by rule, on spare diet, without delicacies, take exercise at the appointed hour, in heat and in cold, and abstain from wine and cold drinks; in short, you must obey the trainer as you do your physician."

It was natural, then, that St. Paul in writing to the Corinthians should apply so familiar an illustration to the Christian life, in order to enforce on his converts the need of self-discipline. He bids them go back in memory to the exciting days of the games, to see the runners, stripped of their flowing clothes, running with nerves alert, muscles on the stretch, loins girt, bodies glistening with oil, eyes fixed on the goal,—the one purpose absorbing all other thoughts,—to get there first and win the longed-for crown. Only one could win it, and therefore each must strive his hardest. Only one, and yet it was so ardently desired by all! And then he turns with a rapid transition to his converts,—writing: "So run that you may win"

—“So run”—run, that is, not earnestly or with less effort than if the crown was reserved for only one of you. Run! with one purpose before you; with eyes fixed on the heavenly goal; not looking aside to the right or to the left; still less glancing back, for that would be fatal. Run! stripped of those clinging garments of old habits and sensual indulgence, of earthly attachments and worldly desires. Run! with your loins girded, with all your soul and strength of mind intent on the prize. Run! that you may win the race.

Yes; as if only one could win the crown! For so it really is. We are not running in the heavenly race one against the other, but each of us is engaged in a match against time. It is a feat of endurance that is demanded of us; a contest in which a moment's rest may be fatal. There must be no turning aside; if we have not reached the goal when the bell rings, we lose,—we shall never reach it at all. And then he urges them by his own example: “I therefore so run, not as at an uncertainty;” that is, he does not wander about the course, zigzag from side to side, but straight on as an arrow from the bow, with eyes fixed steadily on the goal. It may be that the well-known fable of Atalanta's apple was in the Apostle's mind. This matchless maid whose speed no mortal could

equal lost the race through turning aside to pick up the golden apple cunningly thrown in her way. However this may be the fable brings home the moral which St. Paul is enforcing: "Beware, as I do," he seems to say, "of turning aside after the alluring pleasures of the city, those glittering baits which it is throwing across your path. Let them not entice you from your end; that goal to which you should be speeding; that crown which you hope to obtain. If I myself cannot afford to despise these precautions, can you safely do so?"

And then he turns to another well-known feature of the national games,—the boxing match. He tells them how to fight in the spiritual combat; and once more he cites his own example: "I so fight, not as one beating the air." This contest is no child's play; it is a hand-to-hand encounter with a powerful, scientific antagonist; one who is an expert, a well-trained fighter; one who is quick, resourceful, cunning, strong beyond all human endurance. It is no mimic contest, but one on which the issues of life and death depend. Our foe has almost every advantage; he has craft, experience, and force on his side; if we neglect the means of winning, we shall certainly be overcome. We must waste no blows on the air. Each must be well directed and struck home.

He proceeds to tell how victory may be secured in this race for the heavenly prize, in this contest of life and death. "Every one that striveth for the mastery refraineth himself from all things. I chastise my body and bring it into subjection." That is, he points out the means, which are self-restraint, self-discipline.

Now these are not popular means in our days, no more than they were in the days of St. Paul. Yet, he has none other to offer. We know that there is a large class of Christians to whom the sterner side of religion is abhorrent. What is known as asceticism, they regard as the morbid product of Puritanic minds; they flout the very idea of mortification and self-denial; if they cannot reach heaven in some easier fashion they are not quite sure whether it is worth the trouble of reaching at all. Against these views stand not only the teaching of St. Paul but that of his divine Master: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me." And he has made no new conditions for our age. It is an universal law for all time, this doctrine of self-denial, this disciplining of the body for the sake of the soul. We must accept it, if we would win the prize of eternal life. Look at those athletes of old, or at our modern ones:—see how they suffer and toil to gain a corruptible

crown,—a mere wreath of bay which quickly fades,—or a few dollars that are soon spent! and we Christians are striving for an “incorruptible crown.” Let the thought of that crown in heaven spur us on to new efforts, to unceasing struggles! That crown is reserved for you and me. Christ, our King, is waiting at the goal to crown us, amid the plaudits of the great crowd of witnesses, the blessed saints and angels, who are looking on with breathless and eager interest.

The applause of the spectators at the Isthmian Games rang like music in the ears of the proud winners. What will be to us the sweetness of the joy of the blessed, nay of the wondrous words of welcome with which the King Himself shall greet us: “Well done, good and faithful servant! Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!”

ABOVE ALL OTHER NAMES.

“There is no other name given to men whereby we must be saved.” *Acts iv. 12.*

How much there is in a name! The very name of one we honor and love is revered. As we praise the man in praising his great deeds; as we cherish any memento left by him because of himself; so too we love the name of a great character because of him who bore it. The word itself epitomizes his life; calls back to the memory his sayings and doings; and draws from our hearts the tribute that we would pay to his person. If all this be true in the case of the world's great men, of those who have done great things in the sphere of science, letters, art, statesmanship or military achievement, how much more should it be true of those souls that have won conquests in the science of the Saints; and how infinitely more should it be true of that One who surpasses all others in glory, as the sun outshines the stars, “the spotless mirror of God's majesty, the Savior of mankind, Jesus Christ?” Let us consider the power and meaning of that thrice blessed name, — the name of Jesus.

To-day the name by which a person is known in the world of his activity, is little more than a distinguishing, individualizing mark. The conditions of human life and the multitude of human beings have made it necessary that names should be hardly more than this. In earlier days and less complex civilizations, the name indicated something in connection with him who bore it. Some circumstance of birth, some peculiarity of character, some physical quality, some mental or moral power, some prowess in the field of battle, some great achievement was oftentimes the reason for the name that was bestowed. The name fitted the individual and his work. In some rare instances in the history of the race, names have been divinely given. With the power of prophecy God's messenger draws back the veil that hides the future, and, beholding the life's work that was to follow, ordained that the name bestowed upon the individual should be a characteristic one. The naming of John, the Baptist, even in opposition to human wishes and human efforts, is an instance of this. In other cases God Himself interferes to change the name of those chosen to perform the works of Heaven. Thus did God bestow the name of Abraham, the father of nations, in view of the chosen people who were to be his descendants.

Thus also did Christ give to Simon the name of Peter, the rock upon which He was to build His Church. It was not strange then, rather it might be expected that the name of the world's Saviour should be chosen by the Almighty Himself: "Thou shalt call His name Jesus," said the heavenly messenger, "for He shall save His people from their sins." Herein we find the reason and meaning of this divine name: "He shall save His people from their sins." Hence do we place it high upon our altars, for there it should be honored; hence do we inscribe it on our Christian banners, for there it should be raised aloft in triumph; hence do we sound it with great reverence from our pulpits; for there it should be preached with zeal and eloquence; hence it is pronounced often in the administration of the sacraments, for there it works with divine power; hence should we write it upon our hearts, for there it should be loved. But we can find no place where it can be inscribed more properly and with truer meaning than where Christ's enemies placed it, above the Cross of Calvary on the first Good-Friday.

Many are the scenes and facts that the utterance of that sweet and holy name must recall to the mind of the sincere Christian. It carries him back to the mysterious message of the angel

on the day of the Annunciation; to the time when Mary, hearkening to the music of the angels' song, placed her first-born in the manger; to the years when He was an exile in Egypt; to the days of His blessed home-life at Nazareth; to the scenes of His public ministry when He "went about doing good," fulfilling His divine mission. At the mention of that hallowed name there rises the vision of One who astounded the world; who won men by His gentleness and kindness; who exercised over humanity an influence infinitely surpassing the combined results of all the great and good men who ever lived; who by His heavenly teaching awakened in man the dying spark of his better nature and moved him again to walk in the ways of justice and truth. All these facts are borne in upon us by the very sound of that name, just as the scenes that are gone are recalled by an old familiar strain of music. To all these, however, there is a climax, His baptism of blood. In that is the reason of the name; in that is its realization; in that is the fulfillment of prophecy; in that is the centre whence the power of that name extends into the past and the future; in that is man's hope, that "He shall save his people from their sins."

"Jesus of Nazareth" written at the top of the cross! From out the depths of eternity,

His Heavenly Father had gazed upon that name and had ordained the time and the circumstances which were to place it in such terrible relief. God, from the beginning, saw that man would one day rebel and send up the cry of refusal: "I will not serve;" He saw that, in His mercy, He could not condemn man forever; He saw that He would send forth His only begotten Son to become the Saviour of man.

The Beloved Son Himself, who was with God and who was God from the beginning, saw all this too; but especially in His human life was that vision before Him. Whether as a boy He smiled into the face of His Mother; whether in the days of His childhood, He lived in every way as a child; whether as a man He accomplished the works of a man or the works of God; whether of His human charity He found an entrance into man's heart or spoke of heavenly things; whether he was received or rejected; whether He was loved or despised; whether he prayed in the solitude of the wilderness or poured forth His burning loving words upon the multitude that gathered about Him, that cruel vision of His baptism of blood, was ever before Him, calling to Him for its accomplishment.

The Holy Spirit saw that name throughout the ages of man's existence, and in all His work

for the sanctification of souls, knew that it was through this name that He could find entrance into the hearts of men. Whether before that day or since, His grace, as it is powerful in the inspirations with which He favors men; as it is manifested in the guidance of the church; as it is poured forth through the sacraments, could do its work only through the merits of Jesus, whose act of salvation was required that men might return to God.

As the first glory of the Holy Name is to be found in the great act of salvation of which it speaks, so its continued meaning and power are seen in the saving work that its humble, loving utterance accomplishes in individual souls at all times. "In the name of Jesus every knee should bow." Reverently spoken, therefore, it is an act of deepest worship. Jesus! Speak the word, and you have made an act of faith. You have professed your belief in Him who taught men the way of salvation; who said that He was the Way, the Truth and the Life. You have yielded the homage of your intellect to Him who had the power and the right to teach men the things of God. Speak the word earnestly, sincerely, devoutly, and you have accepted Him in the true sense of the word; you have accepted Him completely, not only acknowledging Him, but willingly drinking in every word that He

has given to man, every doctrine that He has taught; every truth that He has proposed; every moral teaching that He has inculcated. You have, in that utterance, bowed the head and prayed: "Lord, that I may see!" You have worshipped Him as God and man; and, as a reward, you have heard Him give the answer: "According to thy faith be it done unto thee!" Above the cross that sacred name is written and at the foot of the cross we must learn to love it. May it always find a loving place in our hearts!

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